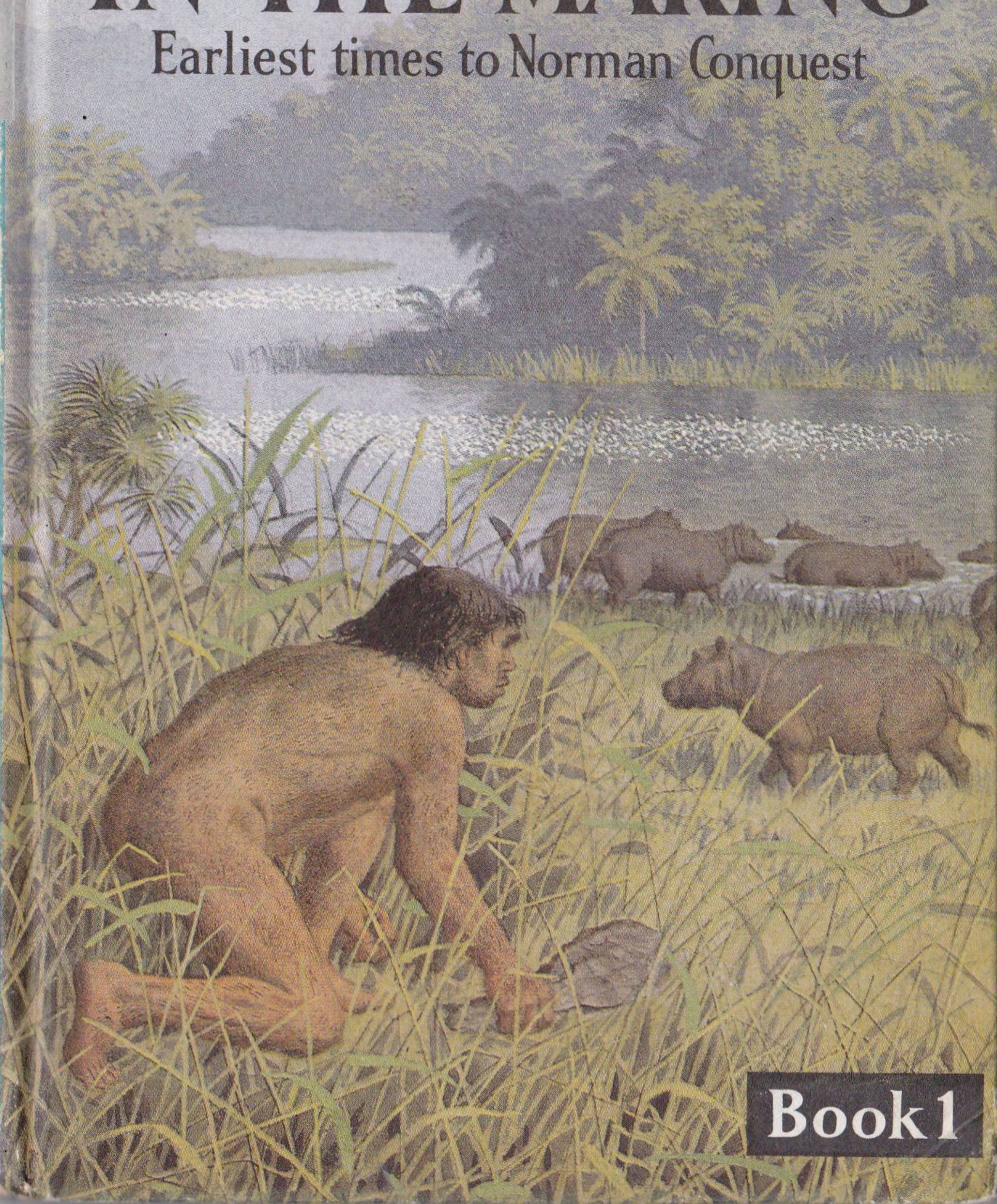
A LADYBIRD BOOK OF

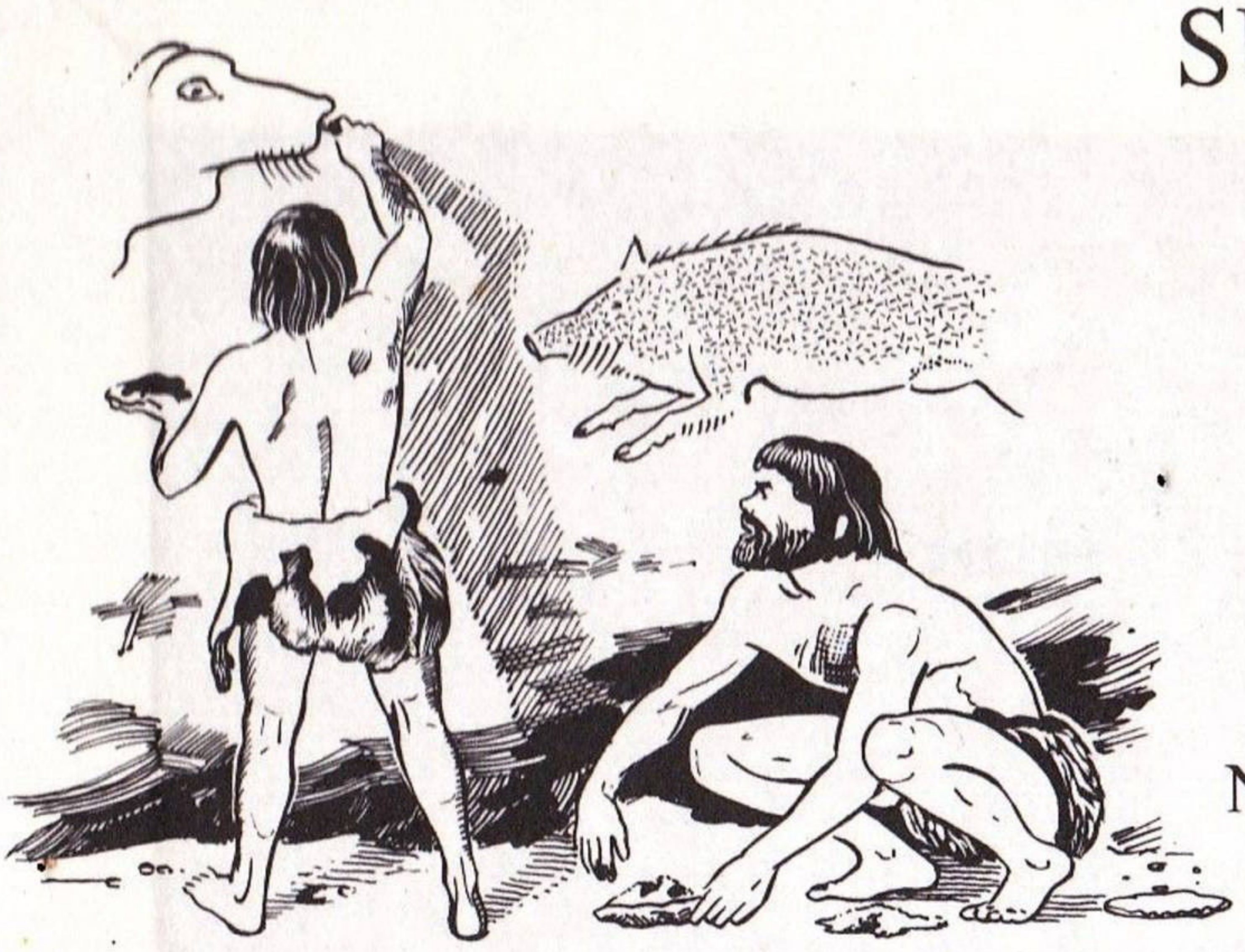
OUR LAND IN THE MAKING

Earliest times to Norman Conquest



Book 1

SUCCESSION OF



PALEOLITHIC

(Old Stone Age)

About 250,000 - 8,000 B.C.

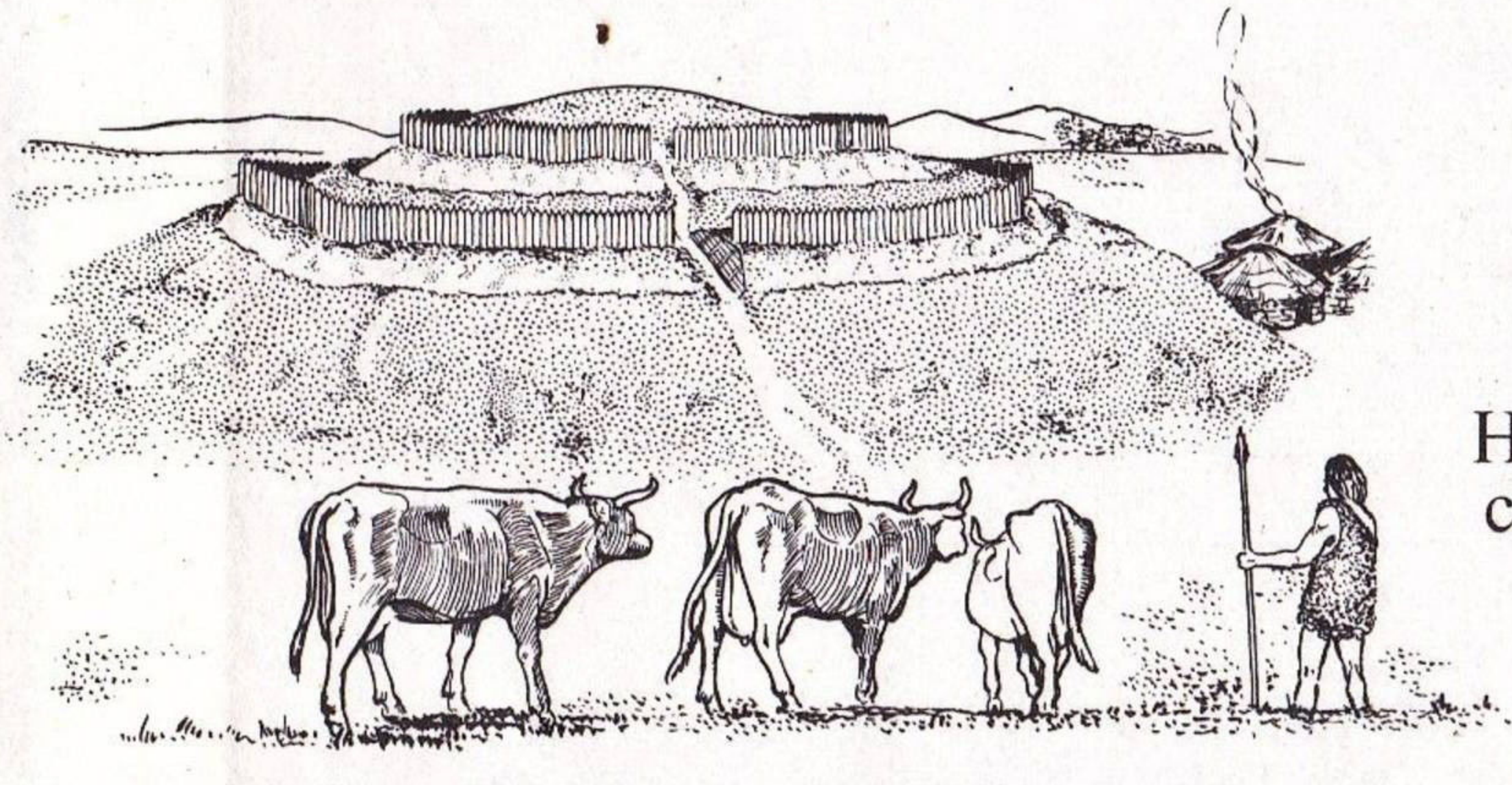
Hunters used chipped flints for tools and weapons. Nomadic, following their prey.

MESOLITHIC

(Middle Stone Age)

About 8,000 - 3,500 B.C.

Built settlements near lakes and the sea. Hunters and fishermen. Used stone and bone weapons and tools.



NEOLITHIC

(New Stone Age)

About 3,500 - 1,800 B.C.

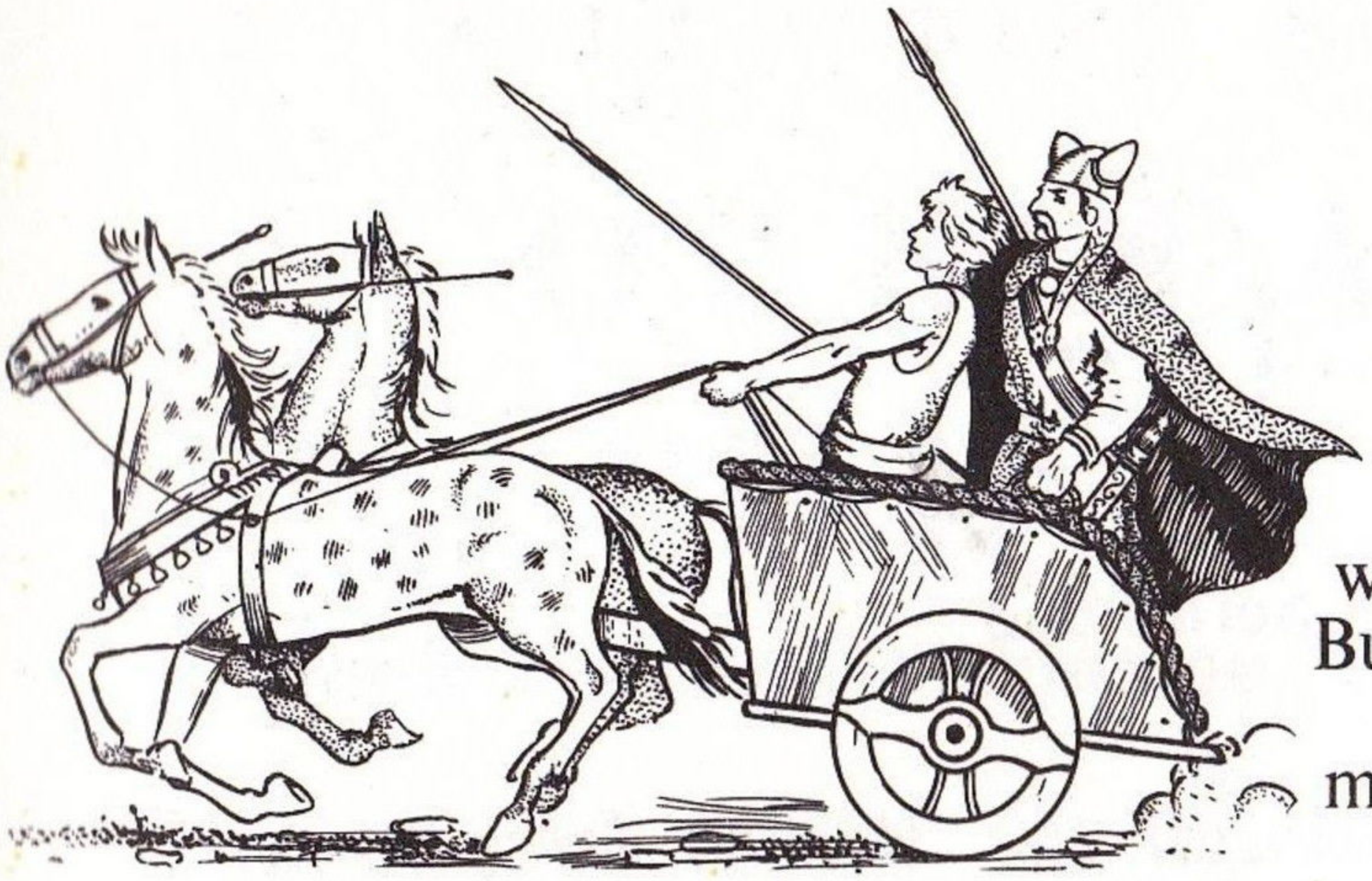
Hunters and farmers. Grew corn and kept cattle. Made bread and pottery.

BRONZE AGE

About 1,800 - 600 B.C.

Made weapons and tools of copper and bronze. Felled trees and cleared forest land. Built houses. Wove cloth, made good pottery, and gold and bronze jewellery.

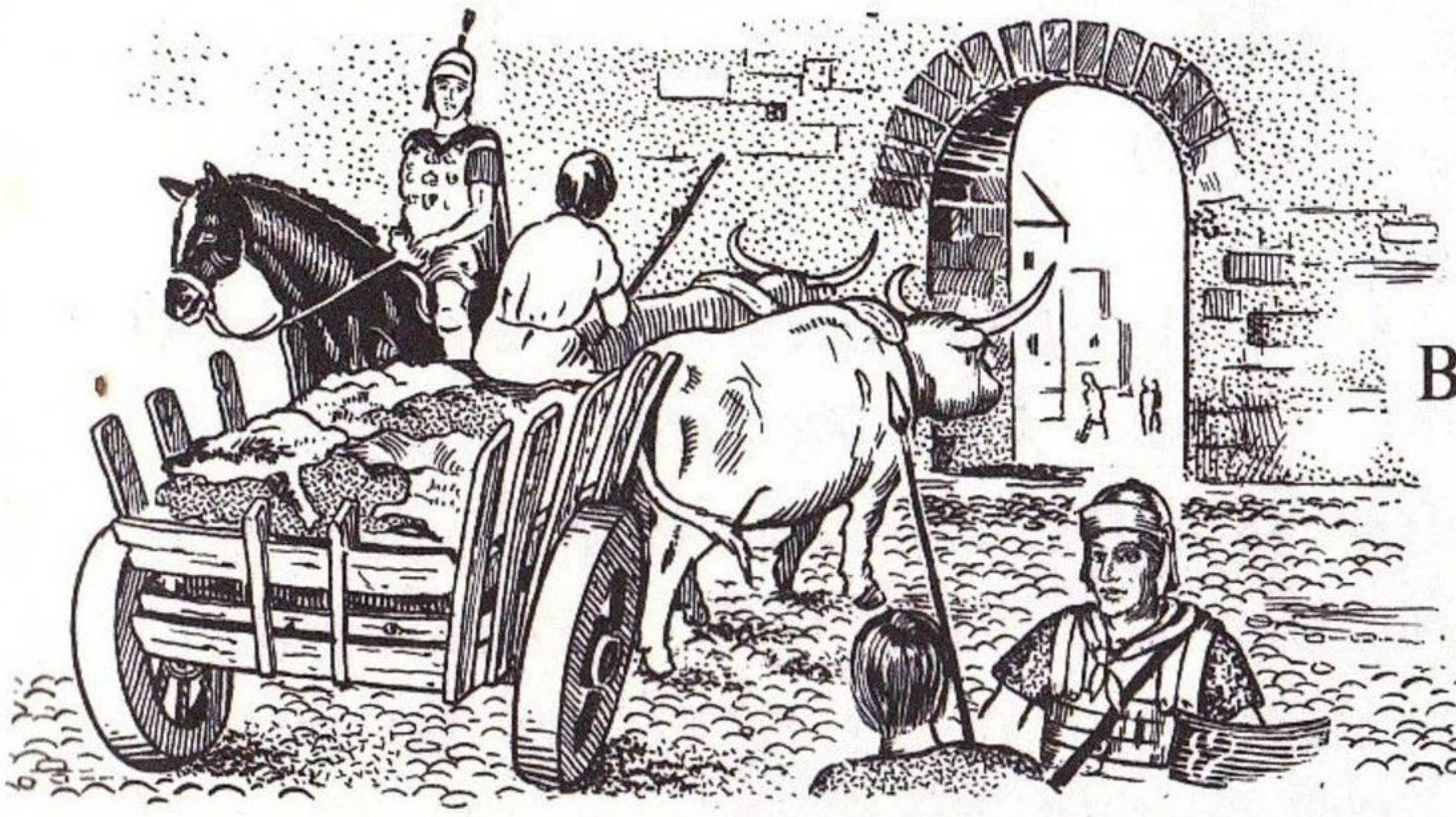
MAN IN BRITAIN



IRON AGE

About 600 B.C. - 43 A.D.

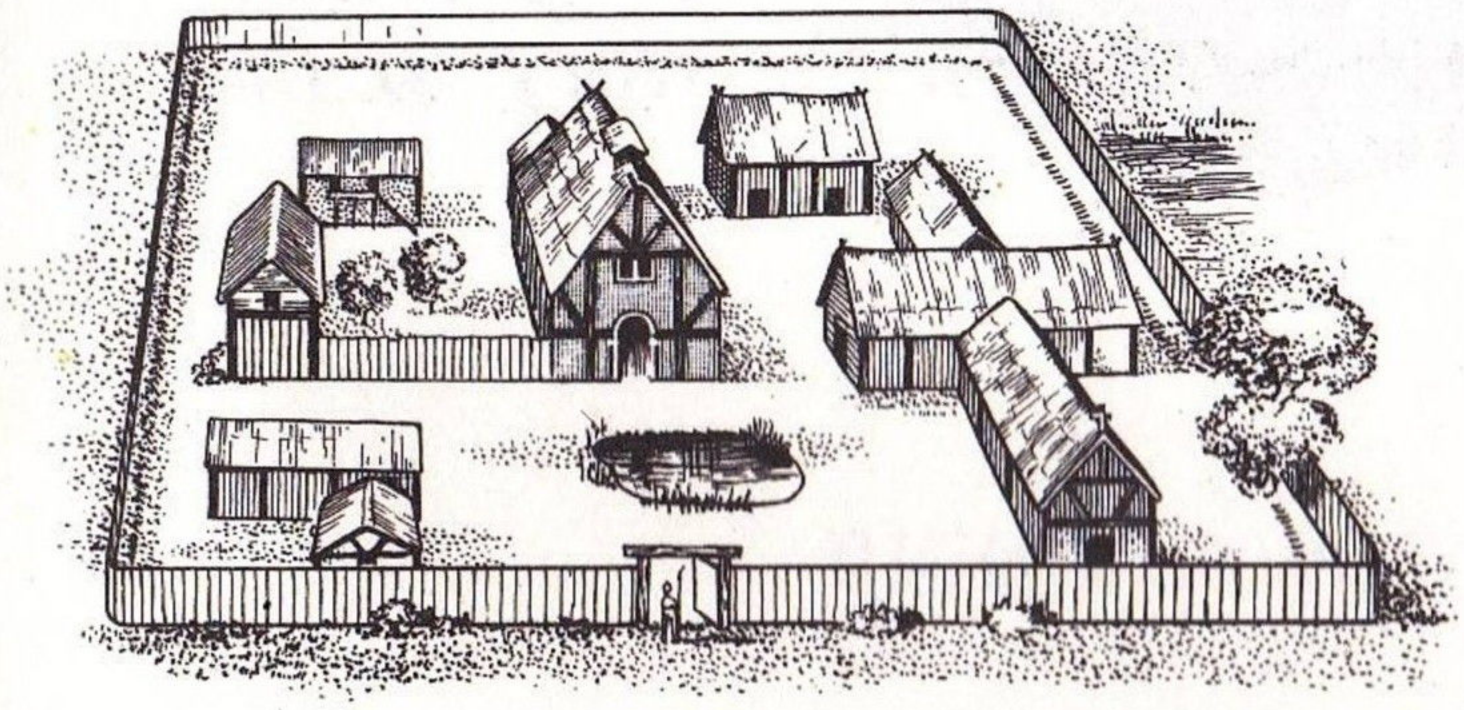
Used iron for tools and weapons. Made iron ploughs. Built earthen forts on hill-tops. Used wheeled vehicles and made rough roads and tracks.



ROMAN

43 - 410 A.D.

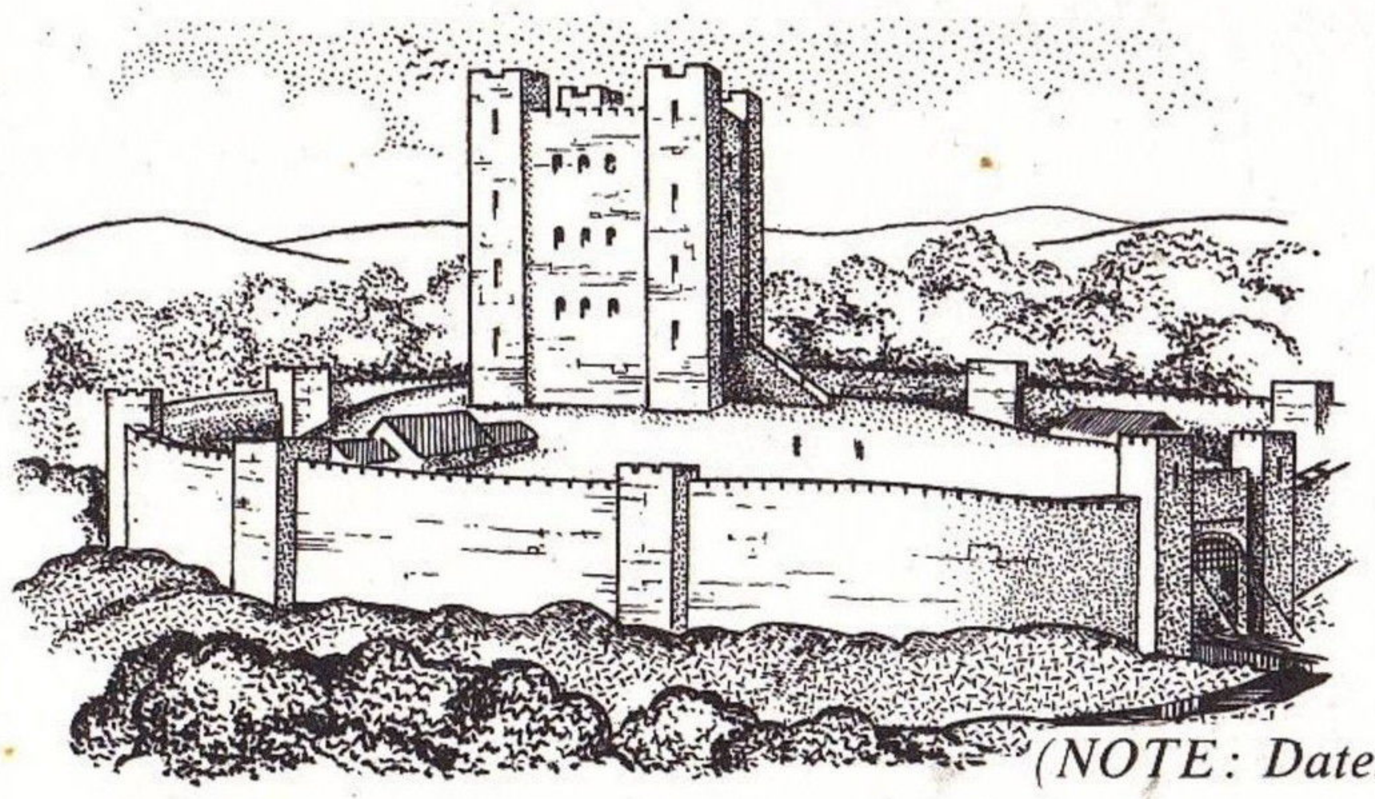
Britain a Roman colony with Roman laws, customs and way of life.



ANGLO-SAXON

About 600 A.D. to 1066

A mingled people of many races. Built towns and villages on the sites we occupy to-day.



NORMAN

After 1066 A.D.

Conquering Normans were the governing class; influenced building, social structure and the law.

(NOTE: Dates before Roman conquest are approximate.)

Series 663

As we travel through the British Isles to-day, we see a land which is the result of millions of years of changes brought about by natural forces—and more recently by man.

This book tells simply and clearly, and with superb illustrations, the fascinating story of the effect on our landscape as the earth cooled, mountains were formed, sea-levels rose, plant and animal life spread, and man arrived to build his villages, towns and roads.

This period covered is up to the Norman Conquest. Book Two carries on the story to the present day.

A
LADYBIRD
BOOK

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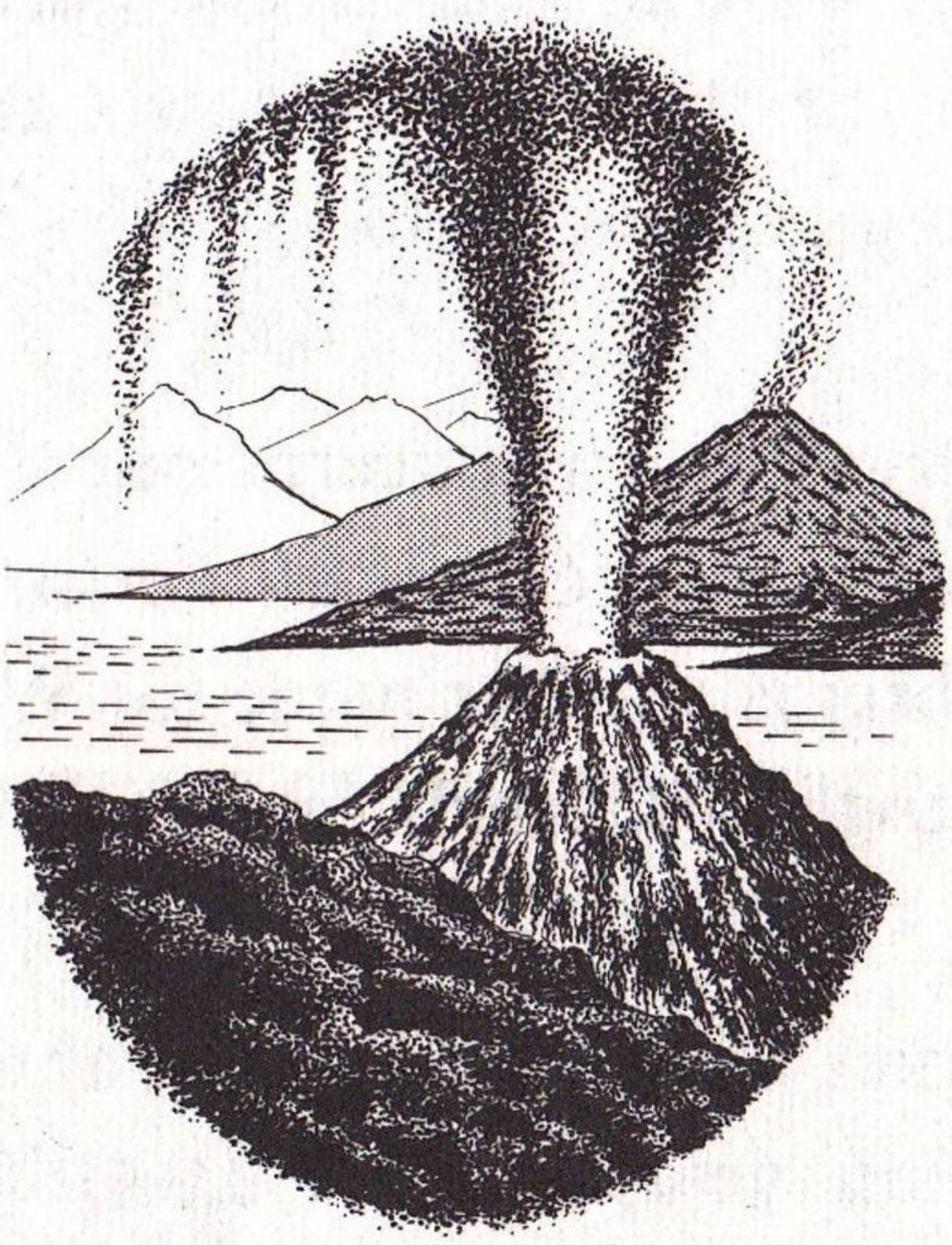
A LADYBIRD BOOK OF

OUR LAND IN THE MAKING

Book 1—Earliest times to Norman Conquest



by
RICHARD BOWOOD

with illustrations by
RONALD LAMPITT

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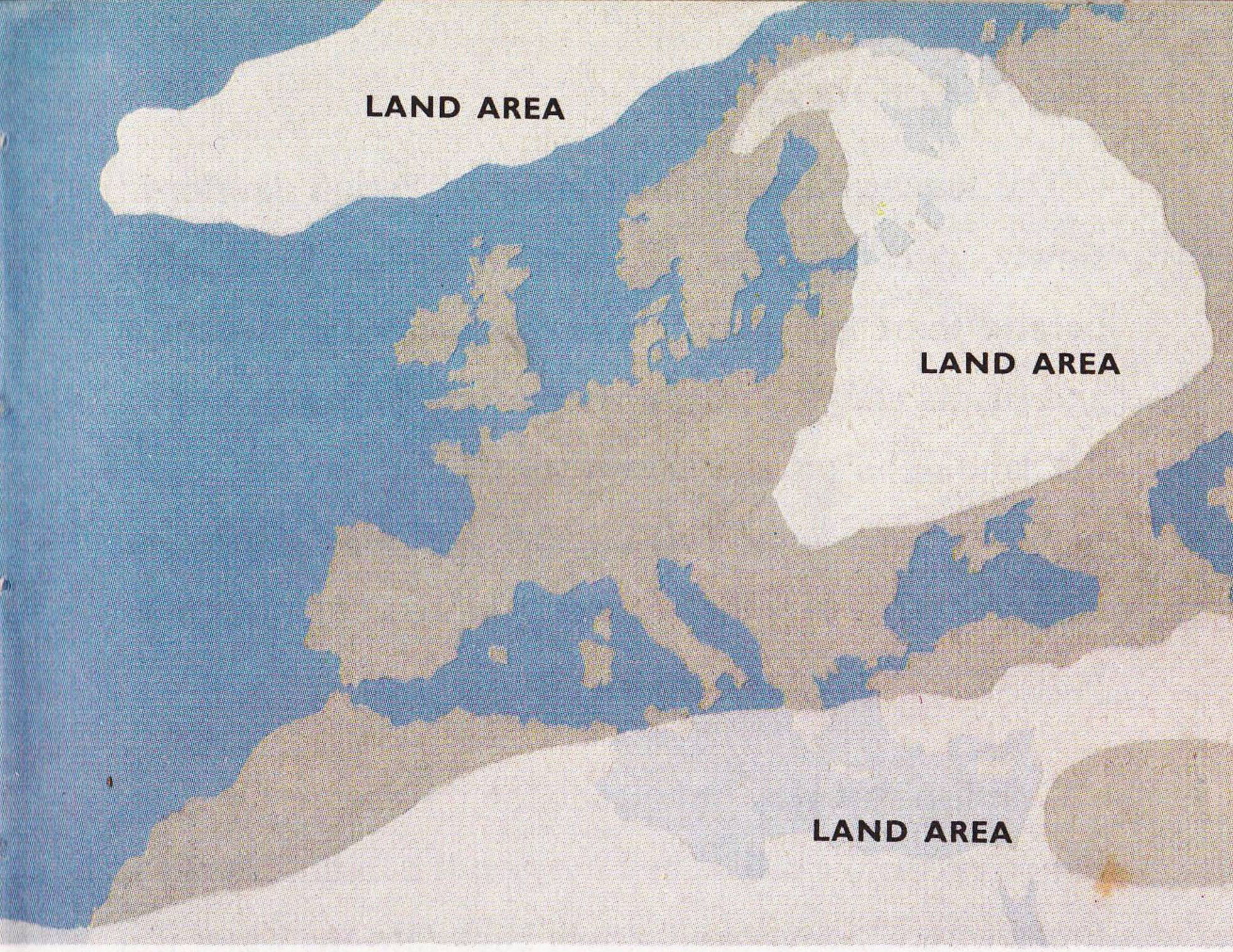
The Beginning

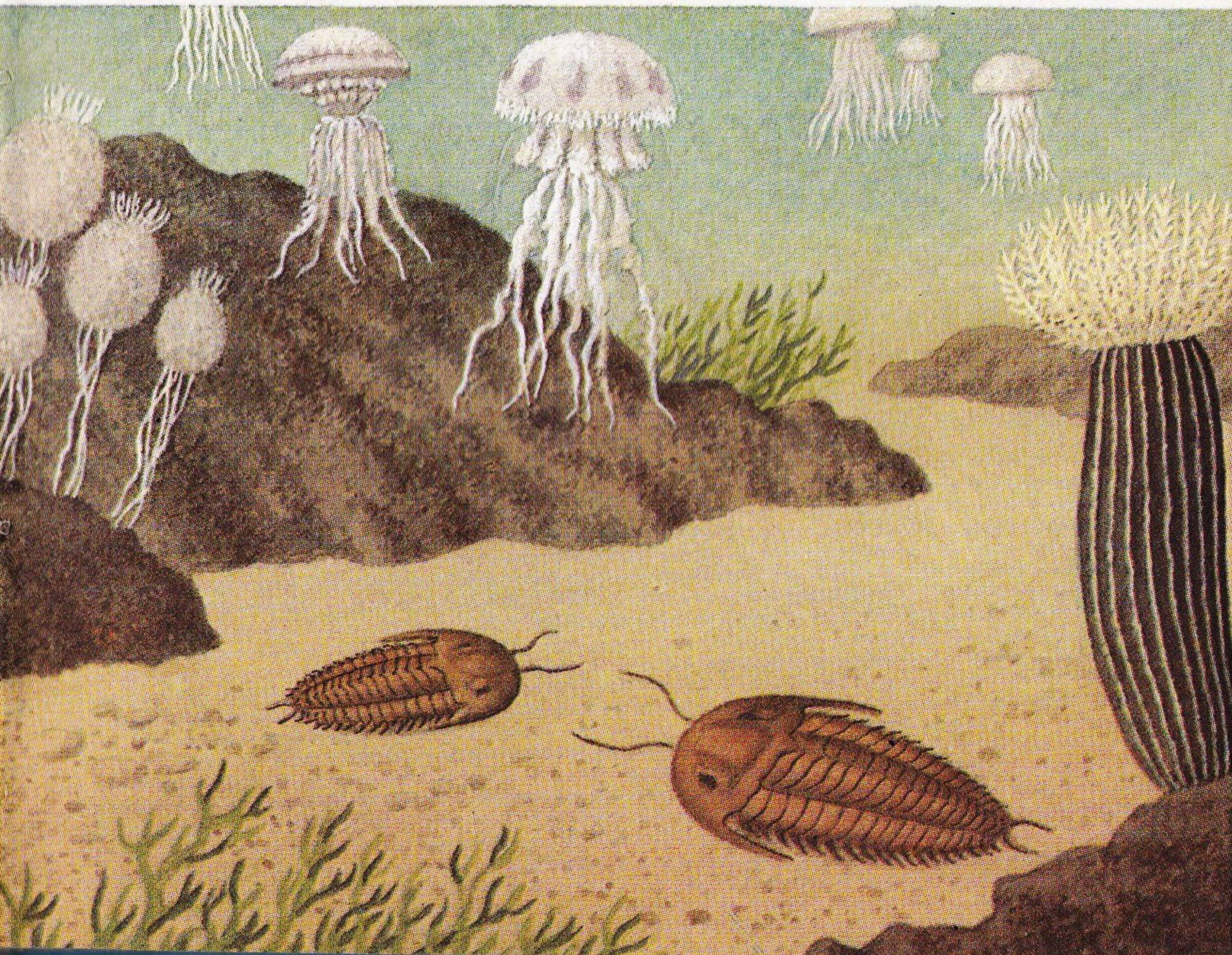
When our planet began its life as a whirling mass of hot gases, there was no land and no sea. Many millions of years had to pass before these hot gases cooled, and land and sea formed on the earth's surface. Neither land nor sea were then as we now know them. Large areas of our present continents were under sea, and parts of the present oceans were dry land. The part of the earth's surface where the British Isles now stand was covered by ocean for millions of years.

The first period which concerns our story of the land of Britain is called the *Cambrian Period*. It is so called because Cambria is another name for Wales, and rocks which belong to this very early period are found in Wales.

The Cambrian rocks were formed approximately five hundred million years ago—500,000,000! They were once part of the sea-bed, and fossils are found in them of the earliest forms of life on earth, shell-fish and creatures called trilobites. The only plant life was sea-weed. There may have been worms and other soft-bodied creatures, but we cannot be sure because being soft, they would not have formed fossils.

Above: The three very light areas show land areas in the Cambrian period about five hundred million years ago—before present Europe was formed. The rest of the land area shown—now Europe—was then ocean. Below: Trilobites and early forms of life on sea bed.


LAND AREA
LAND AREA
LAND AREA



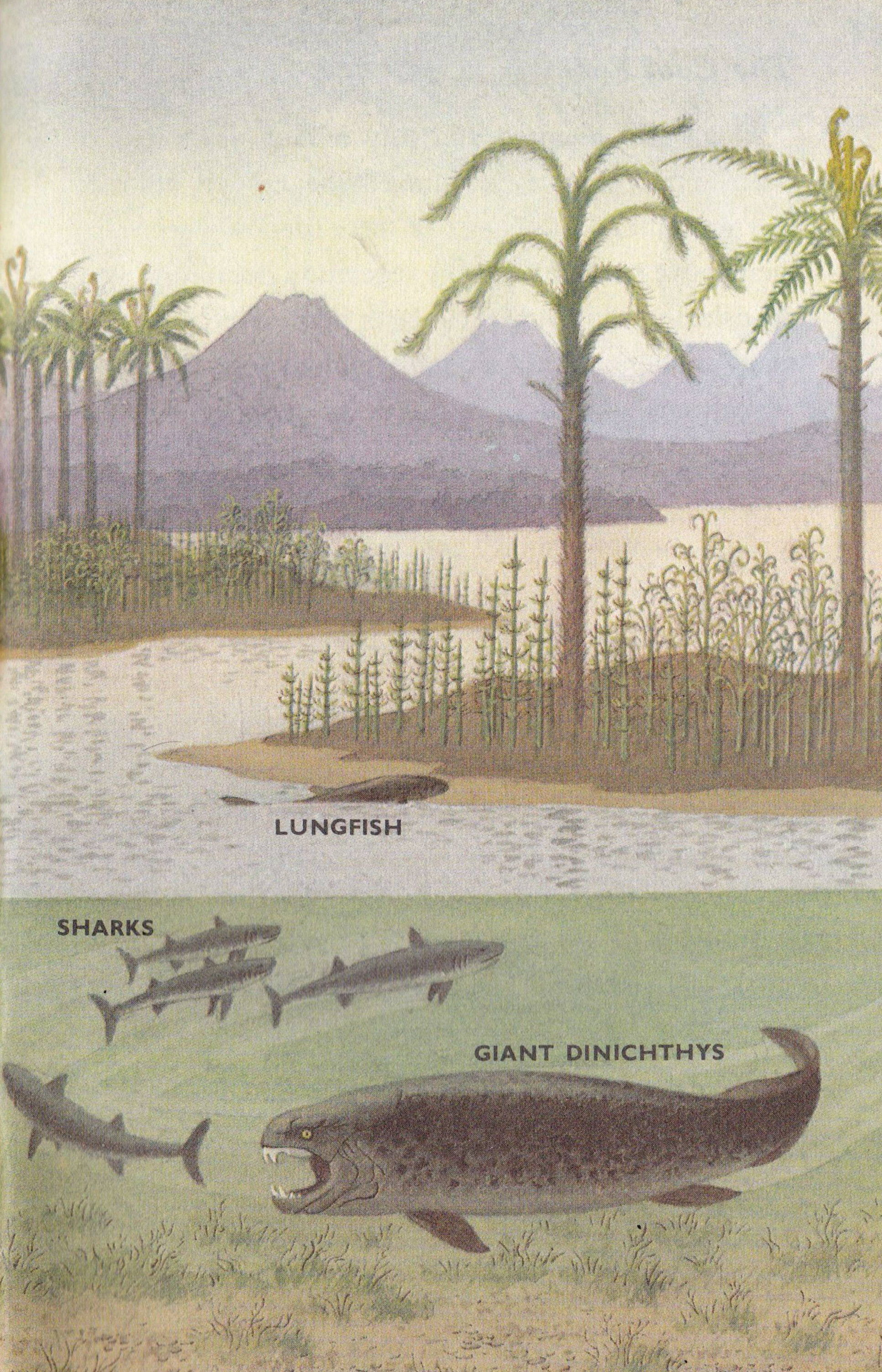
Early Forms of Life

The sea creatures of the Cambrian Period developed slowly, over millions of years. Very gradually they became more varied and more complicated in structure, and plants and air-breathing creatures began to live on the land. The picture shows some of these very early plants and creatures. This is called the *Devonian Period*, because fossils of some of these primitive creatures have been found in the rocks in Devonshire.

One fish was very important for the future forms of life on earth. We call it the *Lungfish*. It had fins like little limbs with which it could crawl back into the water if it was stranded by the tide. It also had lungs as well as gills, so that it could breathe air when it was out of the water.

As time passed, and we must think in vast periods of millions of years, some fish adapted themselves so that they could live on land, and so made the first step towards developing into reptiles. Some of the reptiles eventually developed into animals, and so, millions of years later, man evolved.

Devonian period. Note lungfish emerging from the water. Sharks being pursued by giant Dinichthys.


LUNGFISH
SHARKS
GIANT DINICHTHYS

The Coal Forests

About two hundred and fifty million years ago, a warm damp climate encouraged the growth of trees and vegetation in the parts of these islands which were then above sea level. As this vegetation decayed, it was deposited in the damp earth layer upon layer, and over many millions of years compressed to form the rock we call coal. Often we can see the patterns of stems and leaves in a piece of coal. To-day, some of our coal —made from plants which were once on the earth's surface—has to be mined hundreds of feet underground.

The illustration shows what the land might have looked like at the time of the coal forests. This was called the *Carboniferous Age* because it was the time when coal, or *carbon,* was formed. In those days huge dragonflies, with a wing-span of twenty-nine inches, flew among the trees.

At about the same time the warm, shallow seas were full of many kinds of life— shellfish, sea-lillies, oysters, fish and reptiles. As these creatures died, their remains sank to the bottom and were compressed into the rock we call limestone. In it we can see their fossils.

Carboniferous swamp-forest, about three hundred million years ago. Tree ferns and horse-tail. Giant dragon-fly and labyrithodent. Trees like this made our coal.

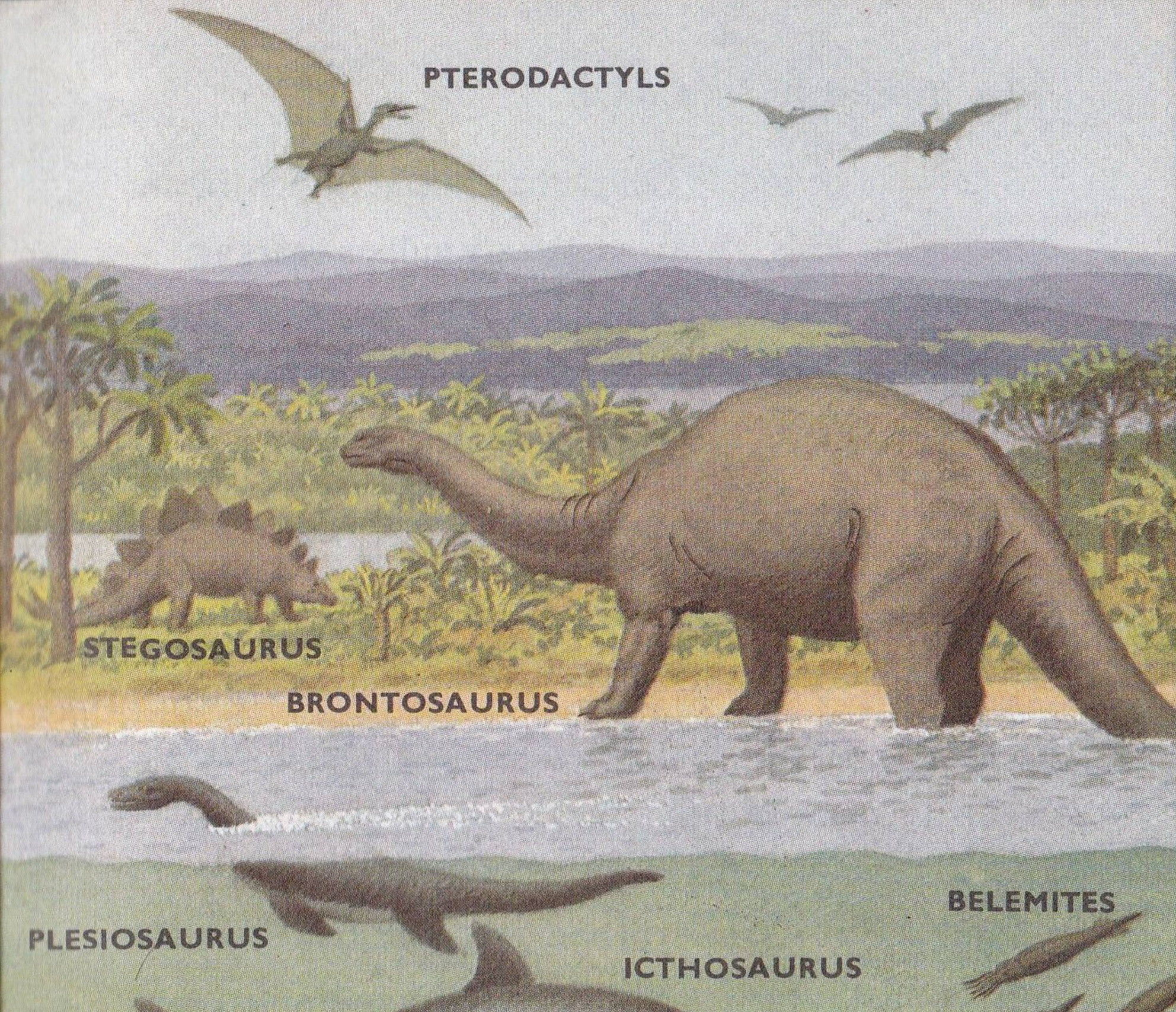
The Age of Reptiles

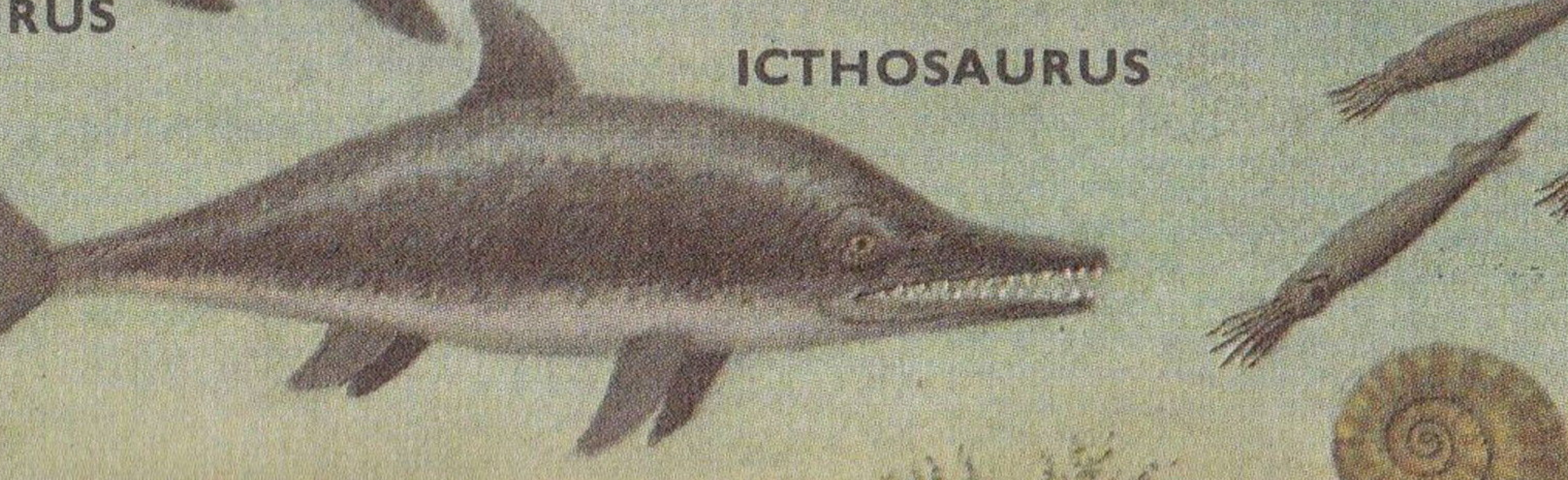
Our next period is called the *Jurassic,* because fossils of the period have been found in the Jura Mountains in eastern France. Over millions of years some of the reptiles became very large. There were *Dinosaurs*—the name means Terrible Lizard—some of which were very fierce. The large *Brontosaurus*, however, was a mild creature although it was as big as a motor bus.

The *Pterodactyl* was a reptile which could fly, using bat-like wings. It was in this Jurassic Period that the first truly bird-like creature emerged, and to this scientists have given another long name, the *Archaeopteryx*. This was partly a reptile and partly a bird; it had teeth, which birds do not have, and feathers, which reptiles do not have.

The *Plesiosaurus* and the *Icthosaurus* both lived in the sea, and so did the *ammonites* and *belemites*, whose fossils we often find. In the picture you can see an *Oligokiphus*, which was a reptile, but was very nearly an animal or, to be correct, a mammal.

Creatures of the Jurassic Period.





THE OLIGOKIPHUS (a reptile mammal)

The Rocky West Coast

The next period is called the *Eocene*, which means New Dawn. This was about seventy million years ago — 70,000,000—and is the period in which Britain began to emerge from the ocean. More land was above the sea than at present, because we were then part of a single land mass with Iceland and Greenland, but the Atlantic Ocean was taking shape.

It was a time of great upheaval. As the rocky crust of the earth cooled, it folded and cracked, rose and sank, and gradually made the land shapes we know to-day.

In what is now the north and west of Britain there was great volcanic activity. When the volcanoes erupted, lava burst through the earth's crust and set in strange, twisted patterns as it cooled. Molten rock was thrust up from the hot inside of the earth, and as it cooled it formed granite. Many of the Hebrides, the islands off the west coast of Scotland, were originally volcanoes. Edinburgh and Stirling castles are built on 'volcanic cores', that is, the inside of dead volcanoes from which the softer outside has been worn away.

70,000,000 years ago great volcanic activity gave shape to parts of the British Isles.

SCOTLAND

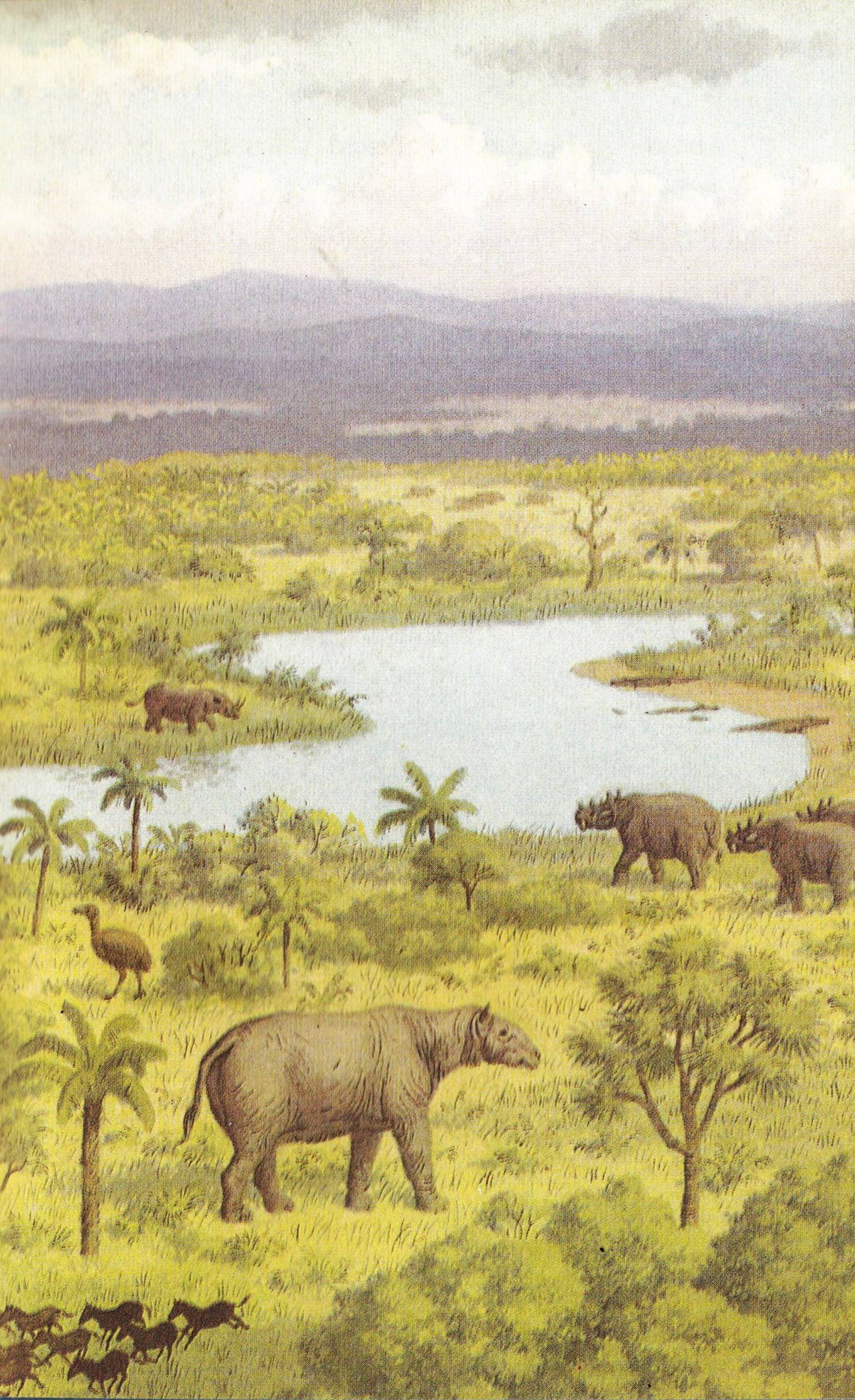
The Chalk Downs

While violent volcanic eruptions burst and broke the west coast of the newly forming British Isles, giving it its wild and rugged character, a gentler movement was taking place to the east. The chalk which formed the sea-bed rose to the surface and made the rolling chalk downs of south and east England. The land through which the River Thames now flows, and the area round Hampshire, sank and rivers began to flow in the general direction of west to east, and north to south.

The climate at this time was warm, about the same as in Malaya today, where there is jungle. The great reptiles, which only had small brains, became extinct and it was the Age of the Mammals. These animals had larger and better brains, so they were able to survive and develop. One small animal of this period is particularly interesting. It is called the *Eohippus*, from two Greek words meaning Dawn Horse. Eohippus was about the size of a terrier and had paws, like a dog, but through millions of years of evolution it retained only the middle toe, and became the horse. There is a little rhyme about it:

Said little Eohippus,
"I am going to be a horse
And on my middle finger nail
Shall run my earthy course."

Scene in the Eocene Period, about seventy million years ago, in the Midland Plain. Note the crocodiles, which have not changed and, in the foreground, the Eohippus, running in a herd — the ancestor of the horse.



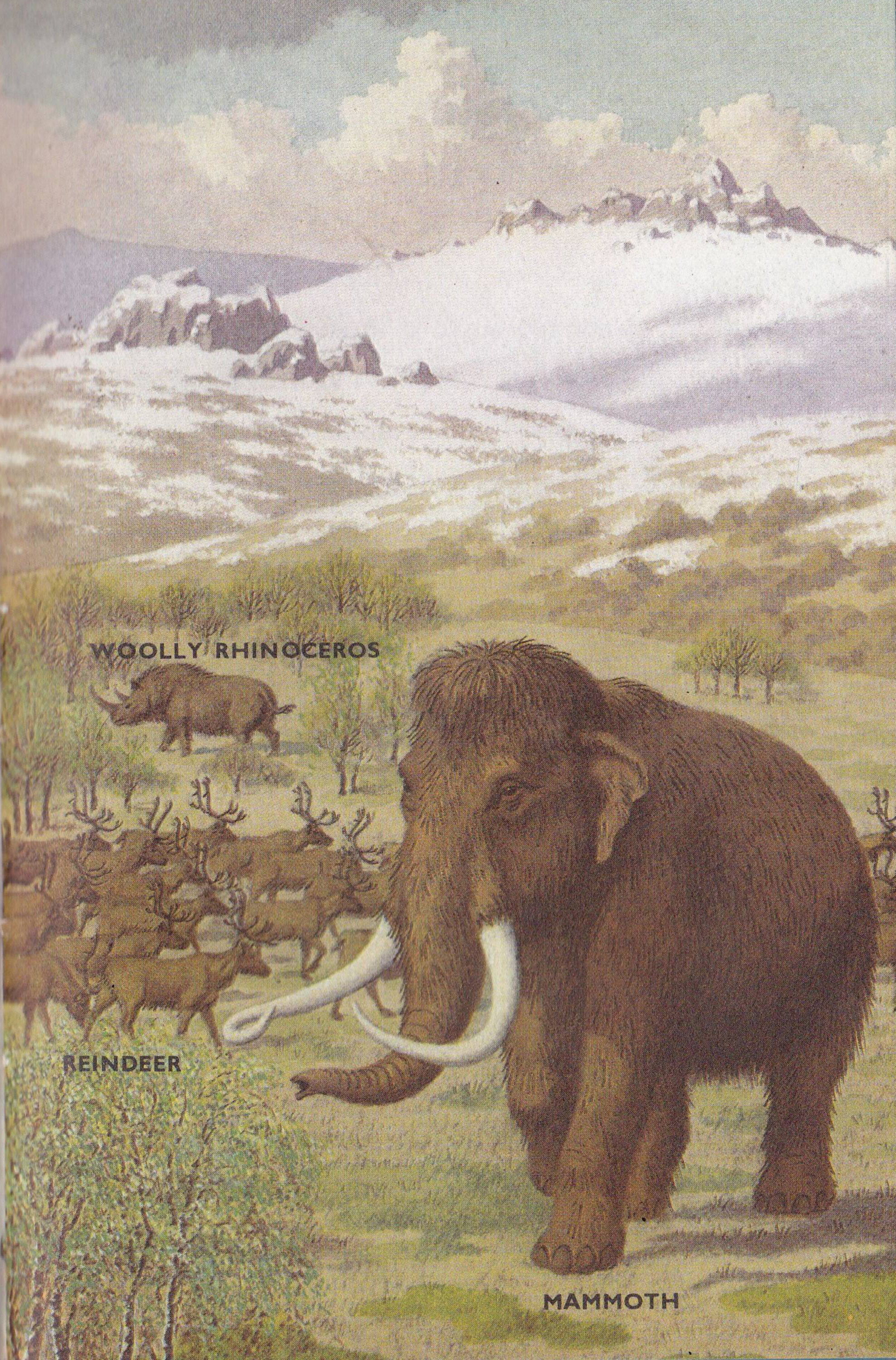
The First Ice Age

About six hundred thousand years ago the world became cold, and the whole of Britain, north of what is now the River Thames, was covered with ice and snow. The only exceptions were a few 'islands', which are now the high hills of the Midlands. We call this the *First Ice Age*.

Slow moving *glaciers*, rivers of ice, ground down the rocks, rounded-off sharp peaks, and carried huge boulders hundreds of miles. Geologists, the scientists who study rocks, can identify stones in the Midlands which were broken off mountains in Scotland.

The southern part of Britain was bleak and cold, the kind of countryside called *tundra*, as in modern Lapland. The creatures which lived in Britain in the warm ages moved southwards or perished of the cold. During the summer, herds of reindeer grazed on the sparse moss and lichen and nibbled the leaves of the stunted little birch trees. Mammoths, huge hairy creatures like elephants, roamed the plains, with the woolly rhinoceros, the arctic fox and other creatures which could find a living in the cold, bleak land.

Scene in Devonshire in the First Ice Age.


WOOLLY RHINOCEROS
REINDEER
MAMMOTH

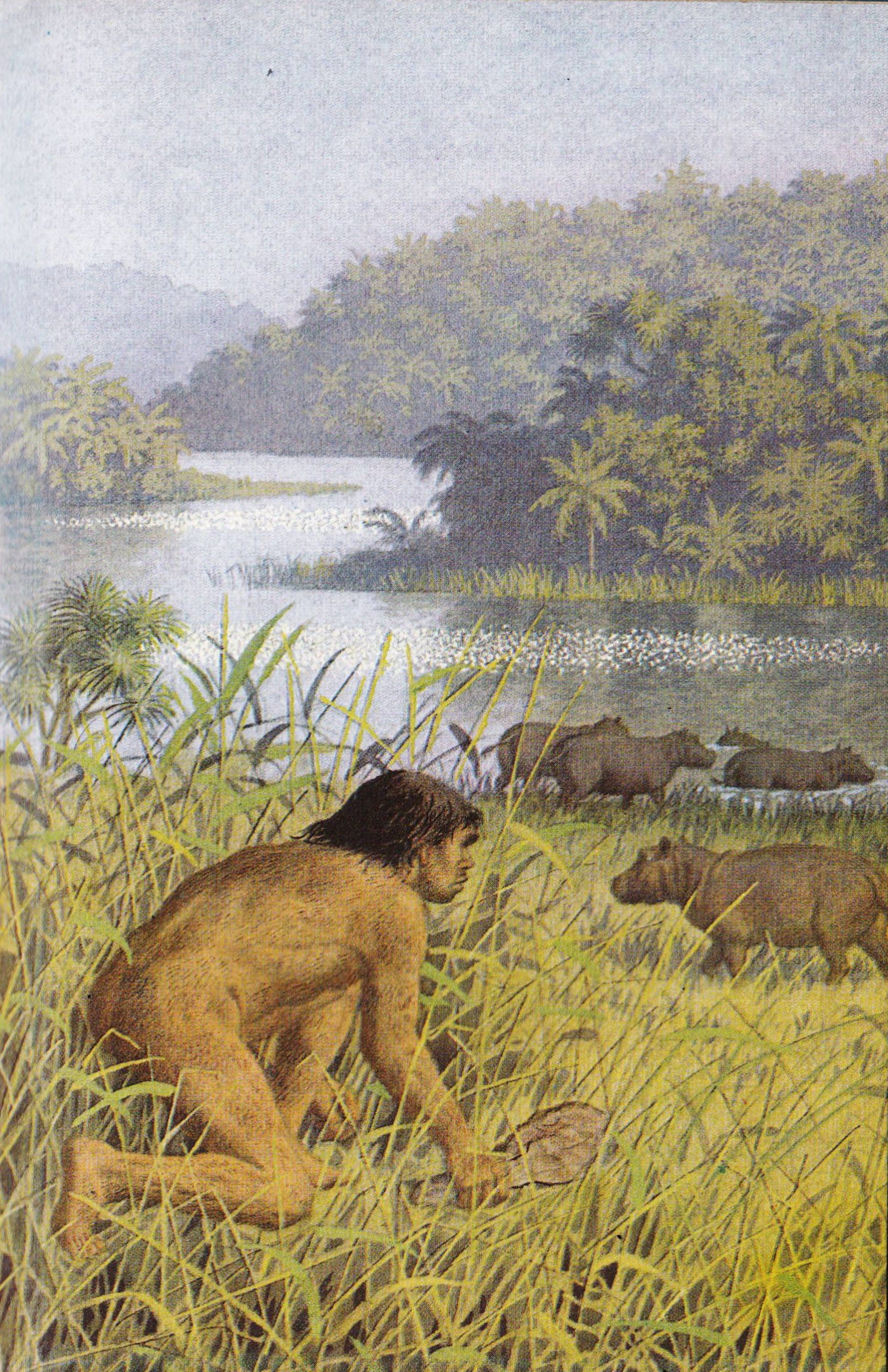
Between the Ice Ages

There were four Ice Ages, each lasting many thousands of years, in which the glaciers ground and smoothed and shaped our land. Between the Ice Ages were periods of warm weather, called the *Inter-glacial Periods,* and these too lasted thousands of years. In the inter-glacial periods grass, plants and trees grew, and it was so warm that the hippopotamus wallowed in what is now the River Thames, and the lion roamed and hunted all over Britain, followed by the scavenging hyena, as in Africa to-day.

As the ice melted, our rivers became bigger and the sea rose higher, and the water smoothed and shaped the land as the ice had done.

It was about the time of the Ice Ages, some two hundred and fifty thousand years ago, that Man arrived, following the animals he hunted. He was a rough, shambling, primitive creature, with thick bones. He was not very clever, but he did know how to chip flints to make crude axes, and we can find his flint weapons in the gravel of the river valleys where he hunted.

Earliest man stalking hippo, in the Thames Valley, about 250,000 years ago.

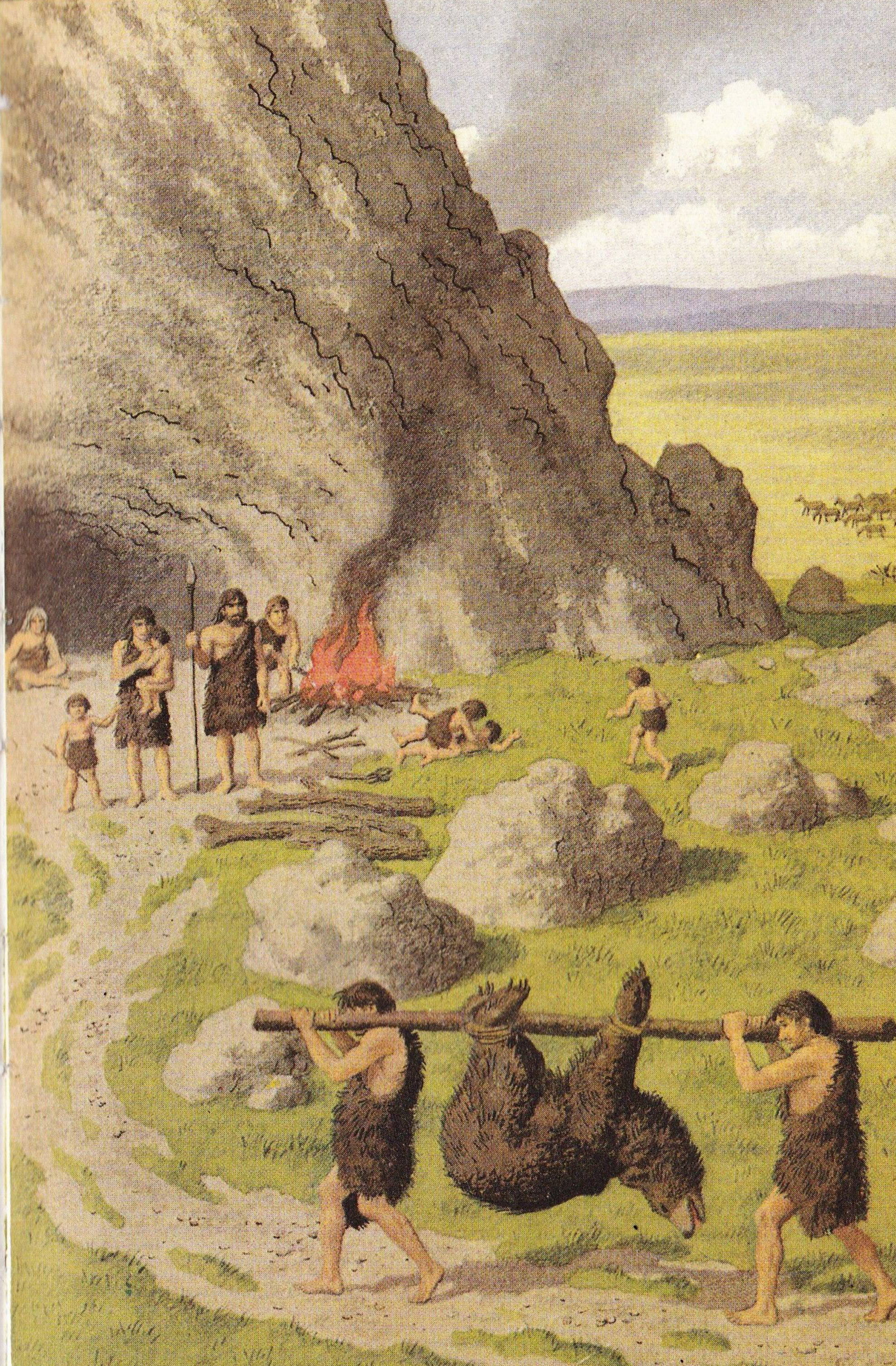


Paleolithic Man

The first Man to use stone tools is called *Paleolithic Man*, because paleolithic means old stone. During the later Ice Ages a new kind of Paleolithic Man appeared in Britain, whom we call *Homo Sapiens*. The earliest men were not clever enough to survive. Homo Sapiens, however, who was tall, handsome and had a brain as good as ours, was able to adapt himself to the changing conditions. When the ice returned to the land he lived in the mouths of caves, made fires to keep warm and wore skins.

These early men did not make any great changes in the appearance of the land, but we find their well-made tools, their hearths and the bones of the animals they hunted. They could draw, and a piece of bone found in a cave in Derbyshire was engraved with a horse's head. In France and Spain there are caves of this period with beautiful drawings. If the caves in Britain were decorated, the pictures would have perished in our damp climate.

Paleolithic man and his cave-home. Note herd of wild horses in the distance, and the bear killed for food and skin.



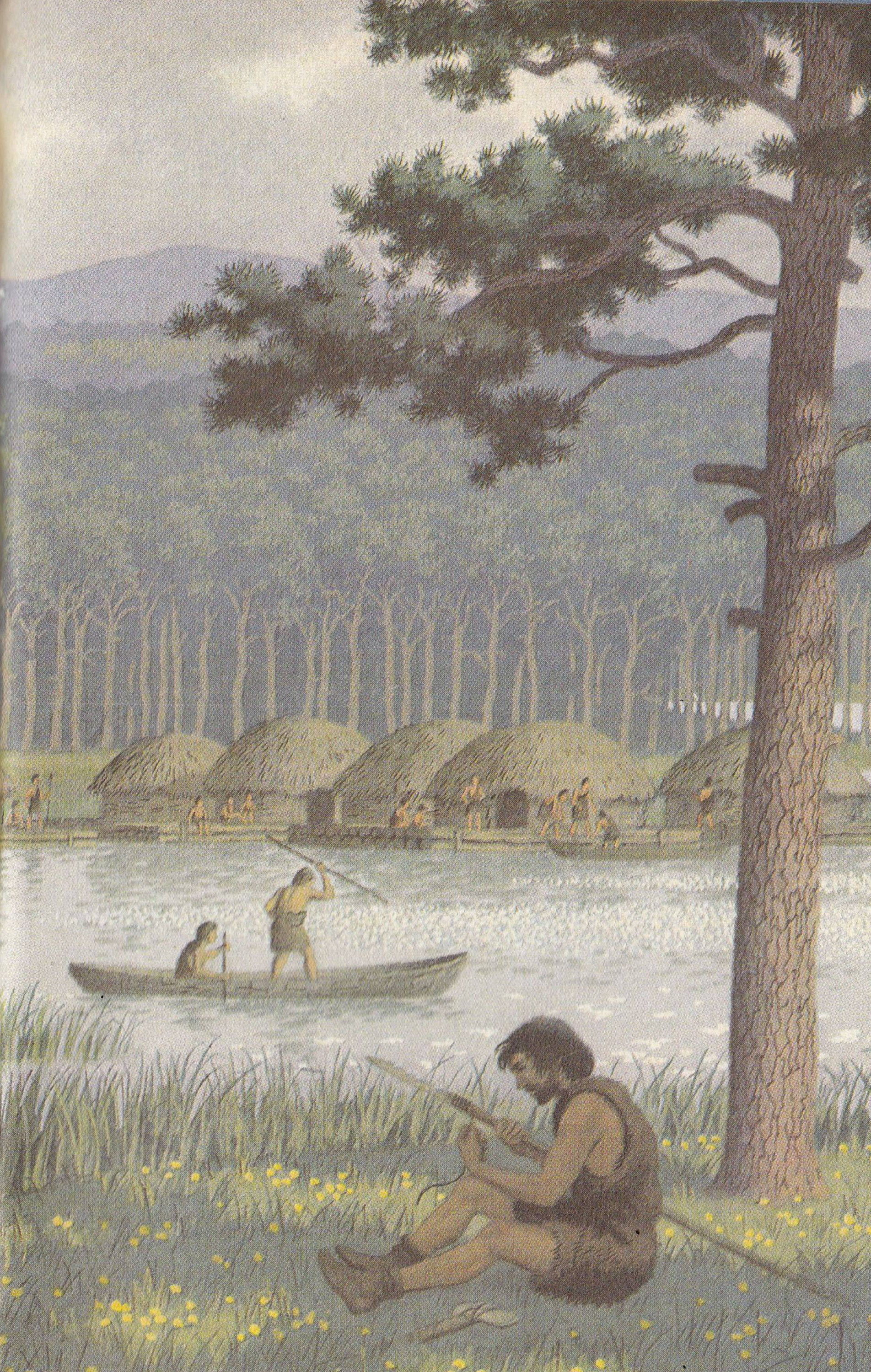
The Pine Forests

When at last the ice retreated, about twelve thousand years ago, Britain was a boggy land with great lakes left by the melting snow. As these lakes dried up, pine trees grew and spread their seeds until the land was covered with one huge pine forest. Grass will not grow under pine trees, so the herds of grazing animals moved away to find new pastures.

But Man remained, and became a fisherman and a food-gatherer. He lived on the edge of the forest, by the sea or at the edge of lakes. We call him *Mesolithic Man* because he lived in the *Middle Stone Age*.

He made harpoons and fish-hooks and long, sharp stone axes with which he could cut down trees to clear a space for a settlement. At a place called Starr Carr, in Yorkshire, a mesolithic settlement has been uncovered. The dwellings by a lake-side were built on rafts to keep them dry. Rolls of birch bark were found, which had been used to make cups and boxes, and also head-dresses of deer horns.

Lakeside dwellings of Mesolithic Period. Note well-made stone and bone tools and weapons.



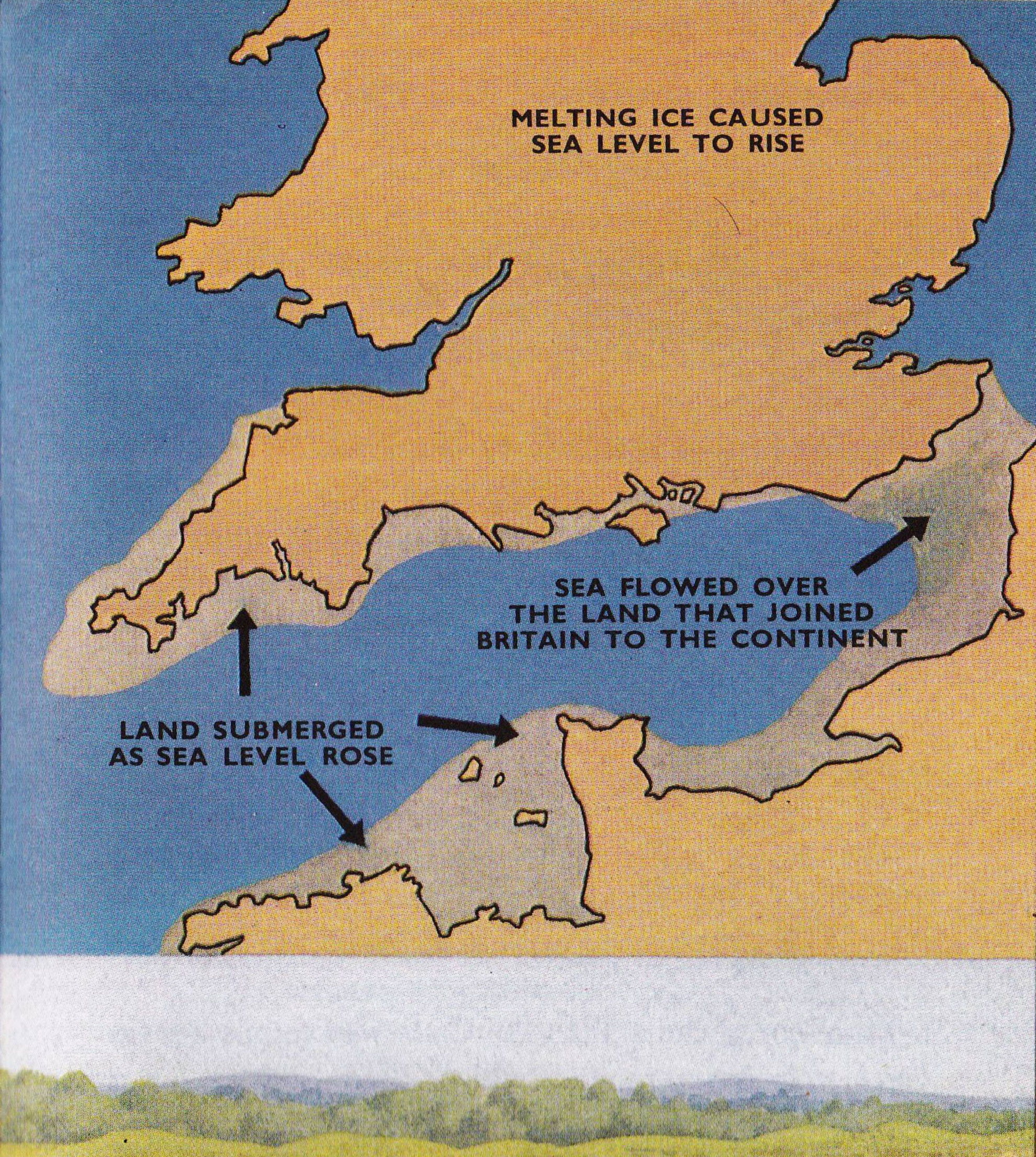
Britain becomes an Island

Gradually the climate became warmer, and over a long period of thousands of years more ice melted. It released an immense amount of water which made its way into rivers and so to the sea. The low-lying land between Britain and northern Europe filled to form the North Sea. An arm of the Atlantic reached eastwards and filled low-lying land between what is now England and France, submerging the land, and when this reached the North Sea Britain became an island.

Britain and northern Europe were forest land, inhabited by small groups of hunters and fishermen, but a new and very important way of life developed in the lands round the eastern Mediterranean Sea. The people there grew corn and ground it to make flour for bread, and they kept cattle and made simple pottery — they had become farmers.

When Britain became an island, some of these people crossed the narrow sea from France in boats. Some landed on the south coast, others followed the coastline westwards to settle in Cornwall, Wales, Ireland and some went as far north as Scotland. We call these people the *Neolithic,* or *New Stone Age,* men.

The map shows how low-lying land was submerged to cut Britain off from the Continent. The picture shows Neolithic men landing in Britain.


MELTING ICE CAUSED SEA LEVEL TO RISE
SEA FLOWED OVER THE LAND THAT JOINED BRITAIN TO THE CONTINENT
LAND SUBMERGED AS SEA LEVEL ROSE

Causeway Camps and Megalithic Barrows

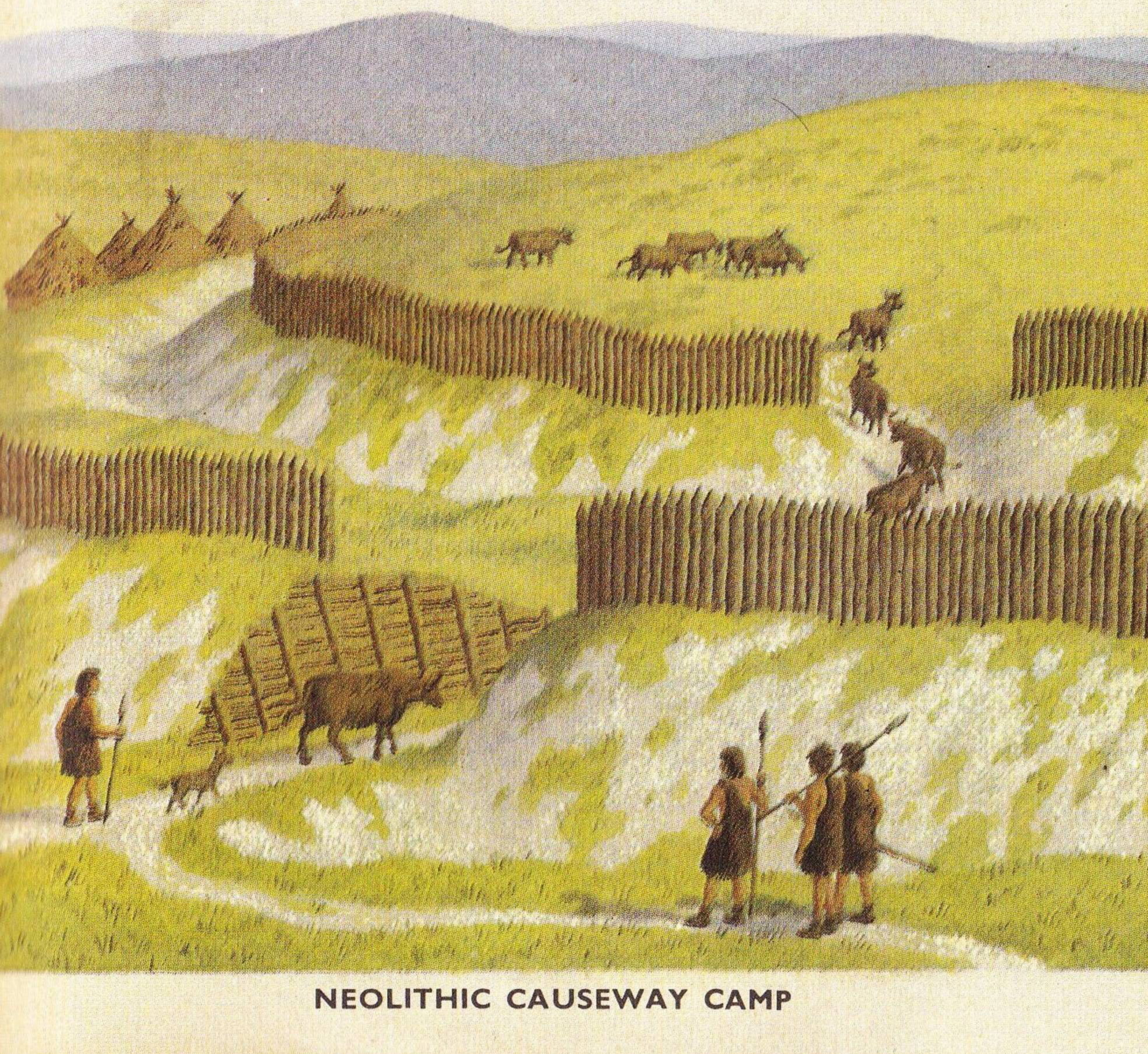
The Neolithic people set up what we call 'Causeway camps', and we can sometimes see evidence of these camps on hills to-day. They were cattle enclosures, consisting of an earth bank, which perhaps had a palisade on top. The purpose was to keep the cattle in and wild animals out, for in those days wolves and bears lived in the forests of Britain.

Huts were built round the camp, and small plots of land were cultivated to grow wheat and barley. The axes used by the Neolithic, or New Stone Age people, were highly polished. They dug the flint for their tools from huge pits in the chalk of East Anglia and southern Britain.

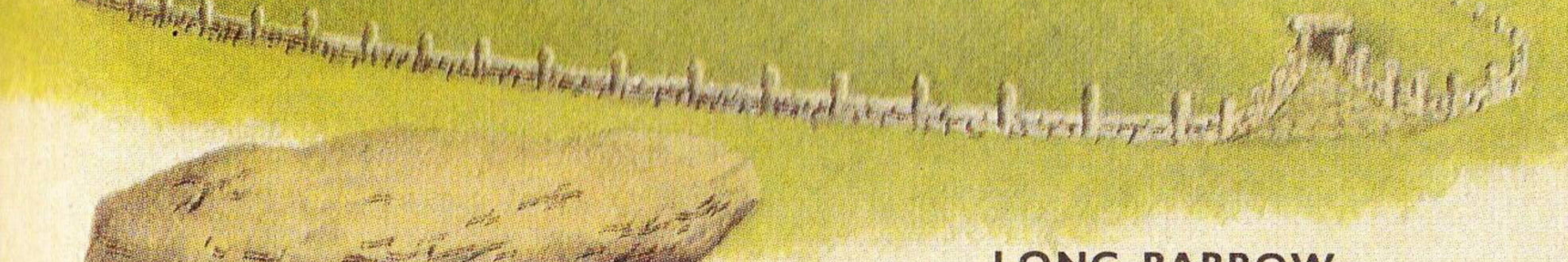
The newcomers mingled with the people already living here, the Mesolithic people, and taught them their skills and their better way of life.

More conspicuous than the Causeway camps are the *barrows*, or burial mounds which we can still see. Some barrows are long mounds of earth, perhaps three hundred feet long, in which a chief was buried. Others with huge stone vaults inside, are called *Megalithic barrows* and these have several stone rooms in which the bones of the dead were put. Dolmens, or Cromlechs, are Megalithic tombs from which the soil has been washed away.

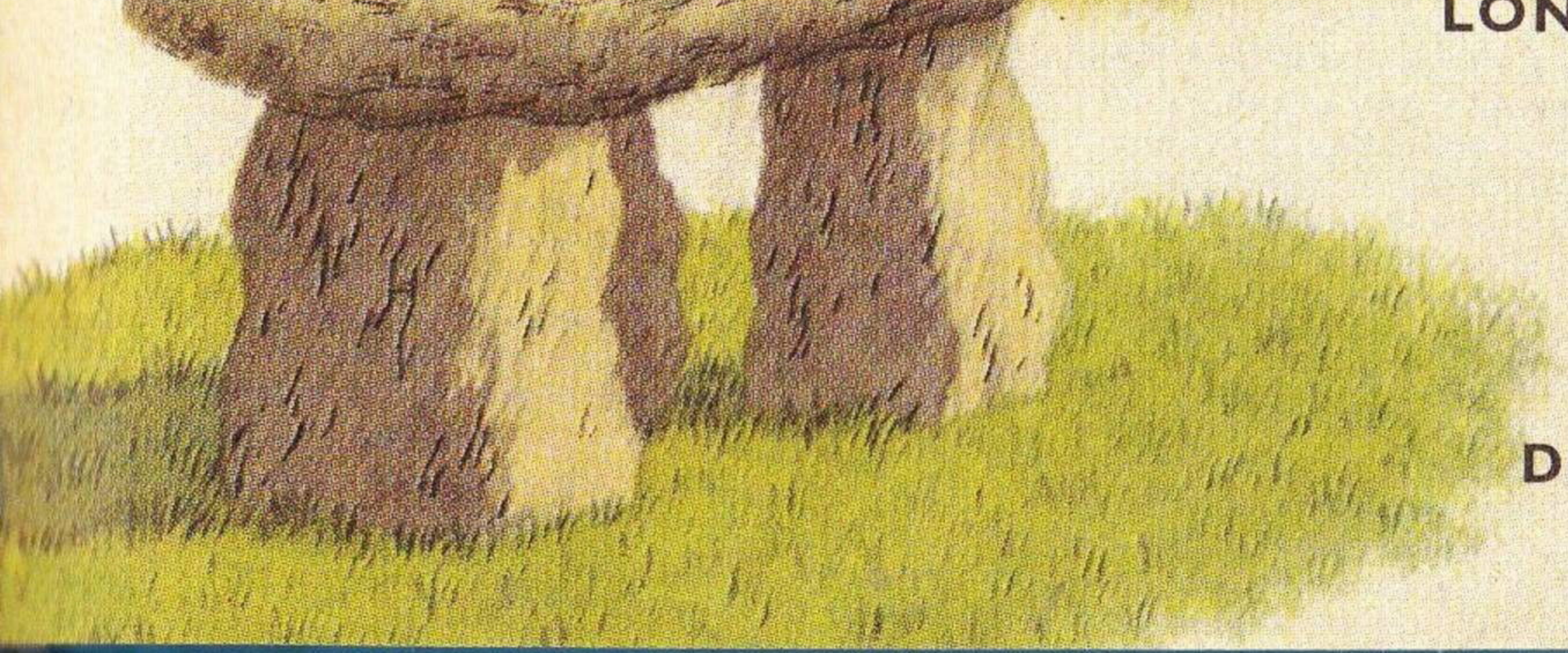
A Causeway camp, a long barrow and a Dolmen.



NEOLITHIC CAUSEWAY CAMP



LONG BARROW



DOLMEN

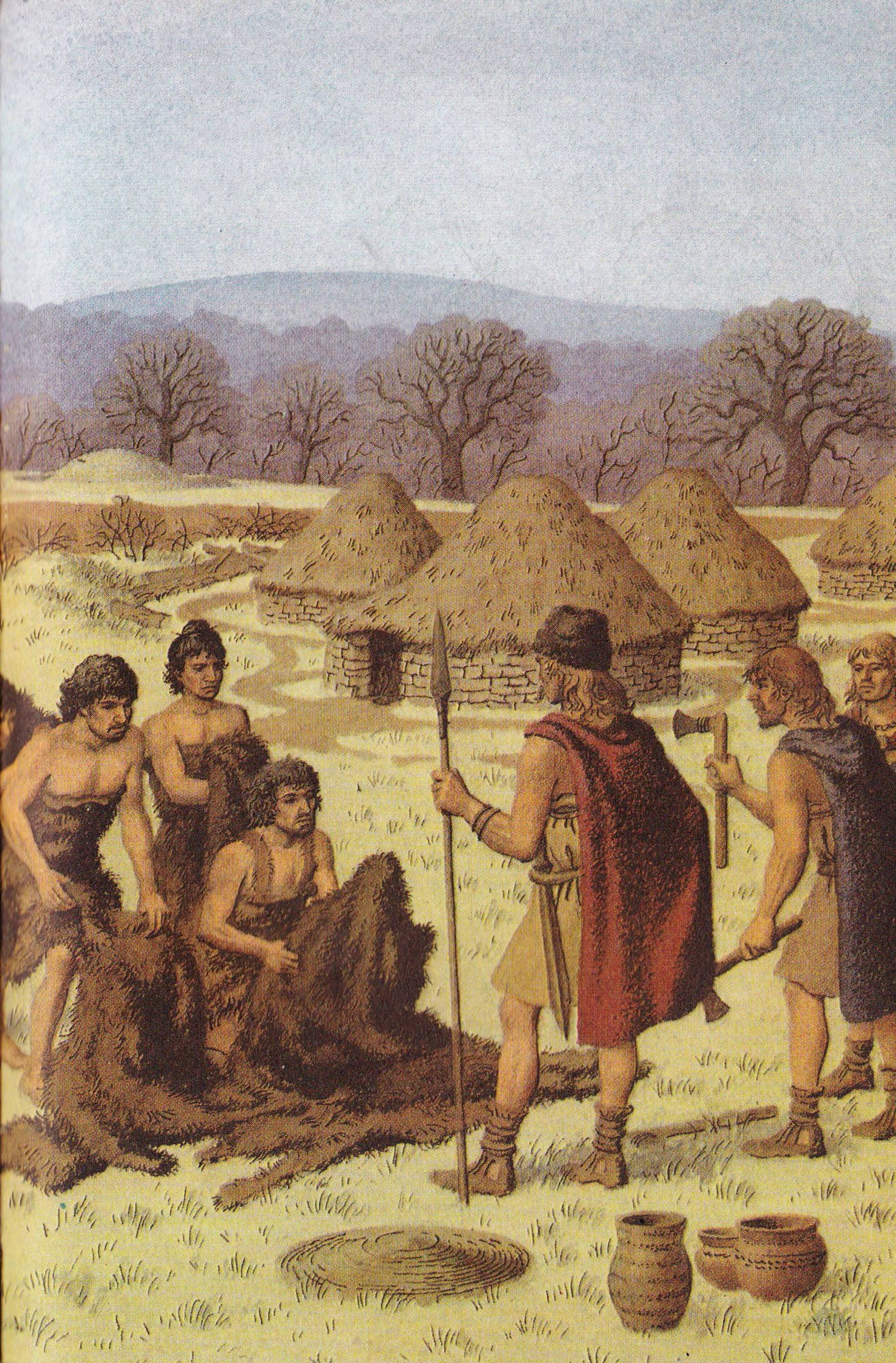
The Bronze Age People

The next stage in the development of our land was the arrival from the continent of the Bronze Age people, some three thousand years ago. They knew how to make tools and weapons of copper and bronze, and while they were farmers they were also warriors. They took the land they wanted from the peaceful Neolithic people, who fled westwards, and whose descendants, dark-haired and slender of build, can be seen to-day in the west, particularly in Cornwall and Wales.

The Bronze Age people could fell trees with their sharp axes, and they cleared some of the forests from valleys to provide farming land. They wore woven clothes and made fine pottery, including beakers, which has given the early Bronze Age people the name 'Beaker people'. Their beakers are sometimes found in the round barrows they built over their dead.

They were good traders, both within Britain, to obtain the metal they needed, and across the sea. Gold was found in Ireland and Wales, and was made into rich and heavy jewellery which they traded with far-away European peoples. Glass beads which were made in Egypt have been found in their barrows in Britain.

Neolithic people trading with the more civilized Bronze Age men. Note round, or bowl barrow in the background on far left.



The Great Temples

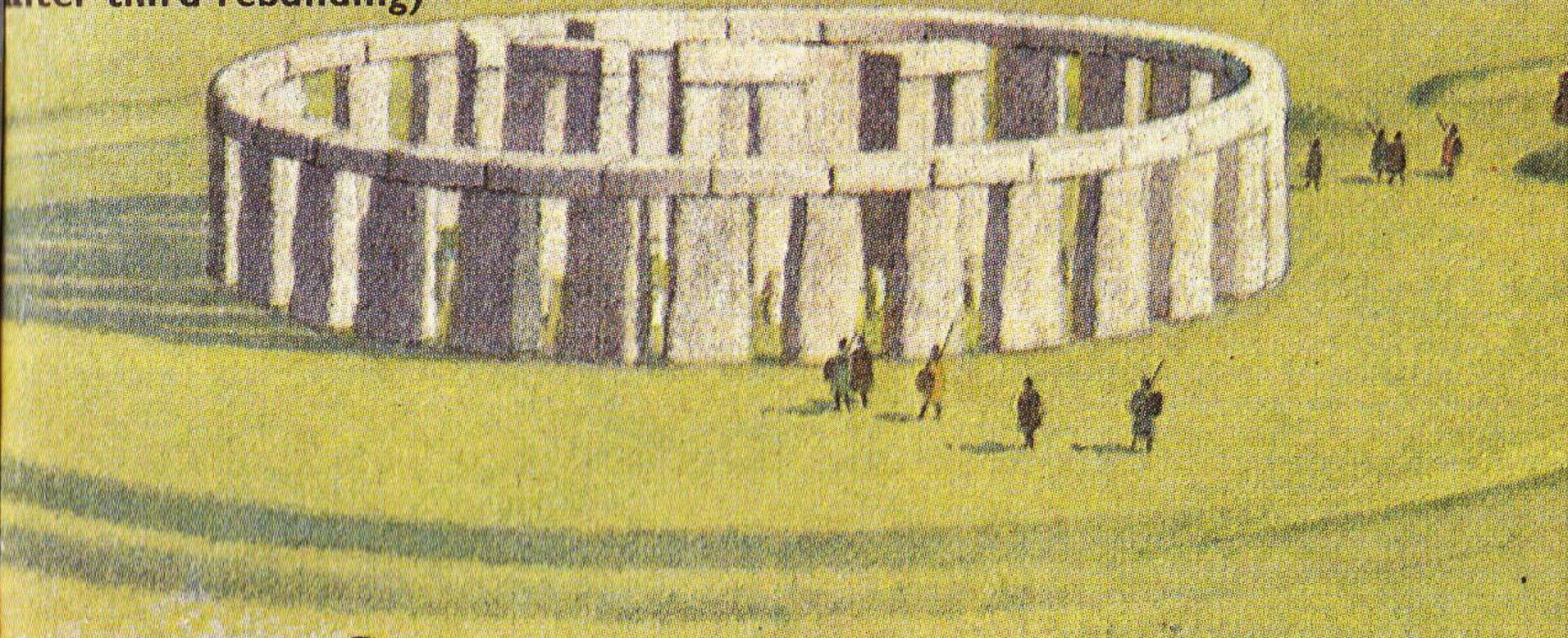
The remains of the temples or sanctuaries of the early inhabitants of Britain can be seen in many parts of the country. They take the form of earth and stone circles, some small, some large. There is no doubt that these stone circles were temples, but we do not know what form of religion was practised.

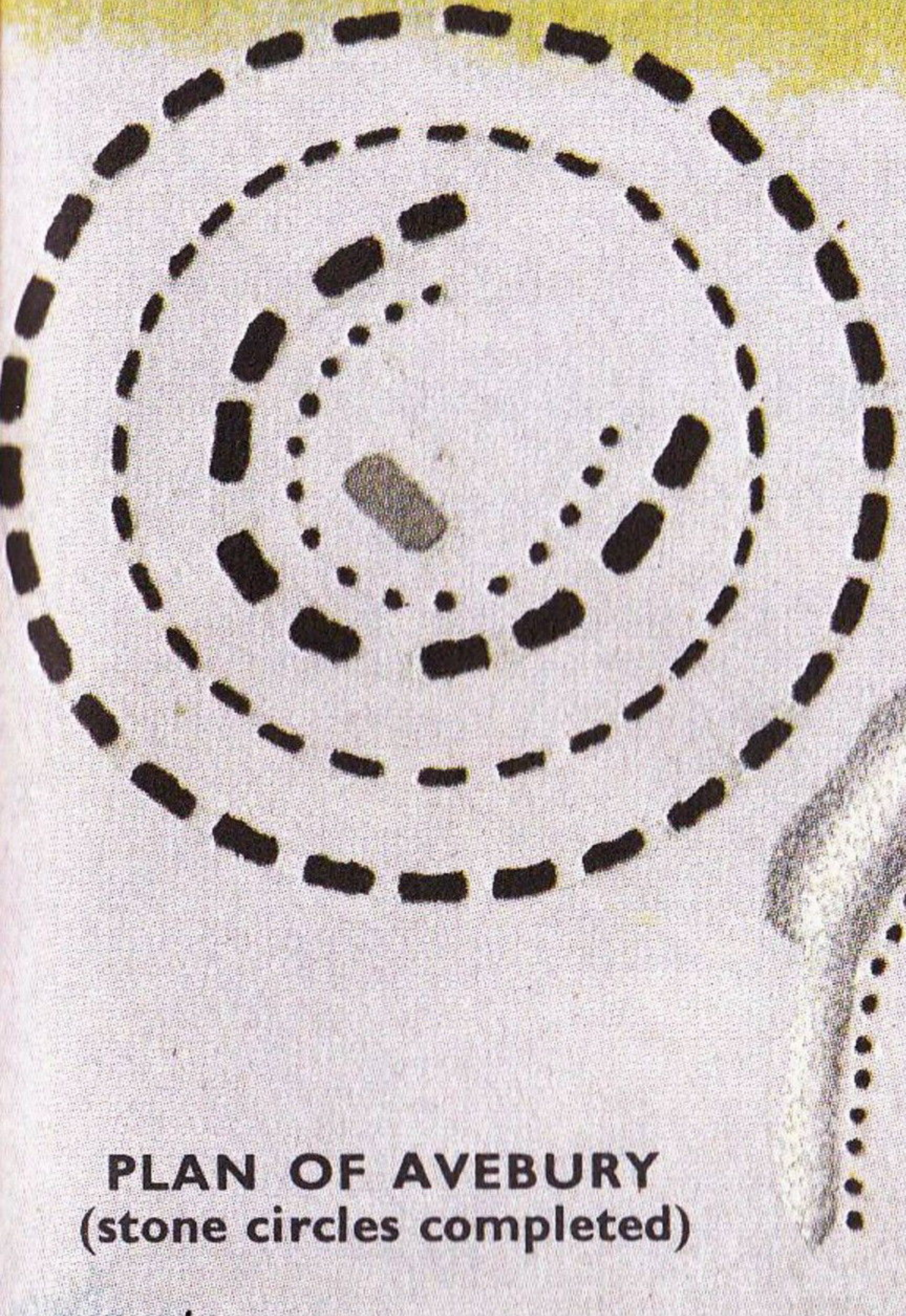
The largest stone circle is Avebury in Wiltshire, with the remains of rings of stones within one large one, all surrounded by great earth banks and ditches. Nearby is Silbury Hill, which is the largest artificial mound in Europe. Silbury is thought to be of the same date as Avebury, but no one knows why it was built.

The most famous stone temple is Stonehenge, also in Wiltshire. It was built, altered and rebuilt several times, and the circle of stones we see to-day is the result of the third rebuilding. How the massive upright sarsen stones were transported and raised, how the lintels were laid across the top, and how the bluestones, another kind of stone used in Stonehenge, were brought all the way from South Wales to Wiltshire, will always be a mystery, though there are many theories.

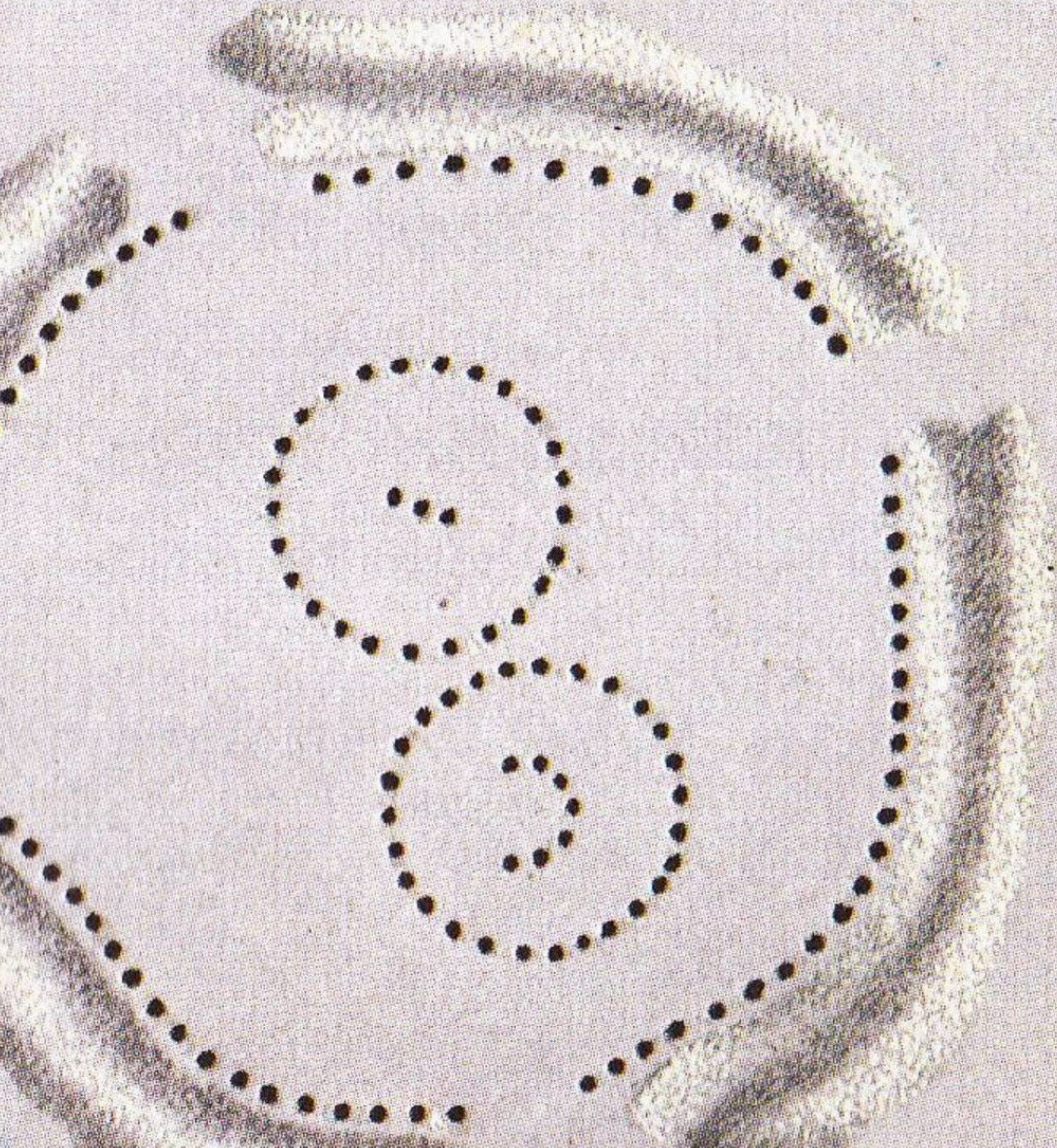
Ancient temples in Britain.

STONEHENGE
(after third rebuilding)

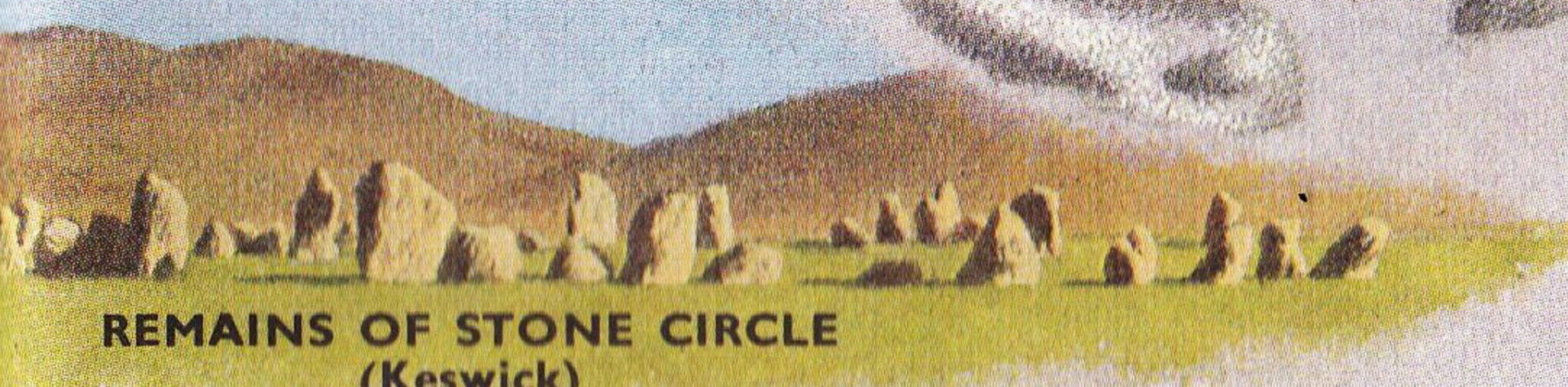




PLAN OF STONEHENGE
(stone circles complete)



PLAN OF AVEBURY
(stone circles completed)



REMAINS OF STONE CIRCLE
(Keswick)

The Iron Age People

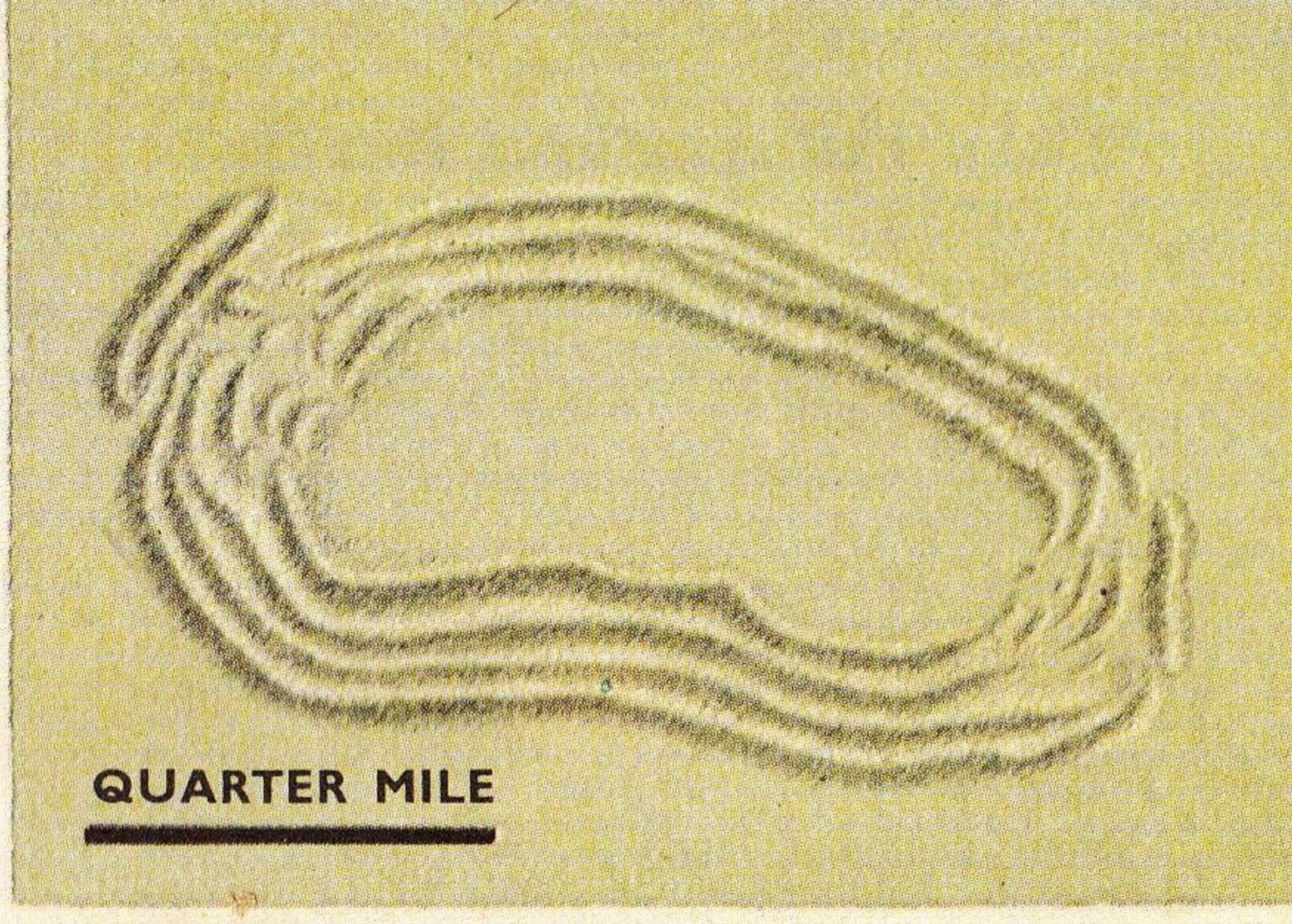
A new race of people began to settle in Britain about two thousand five hundred years ago and helped to shape our land. They were the Celts, and because they knew how to make tools and weapons of iron, we call them the *Iron Age* people. Iron is stronger, cheaper and more plentiful than bronze, and gradually bronze came to be used only for jewellery and coins.

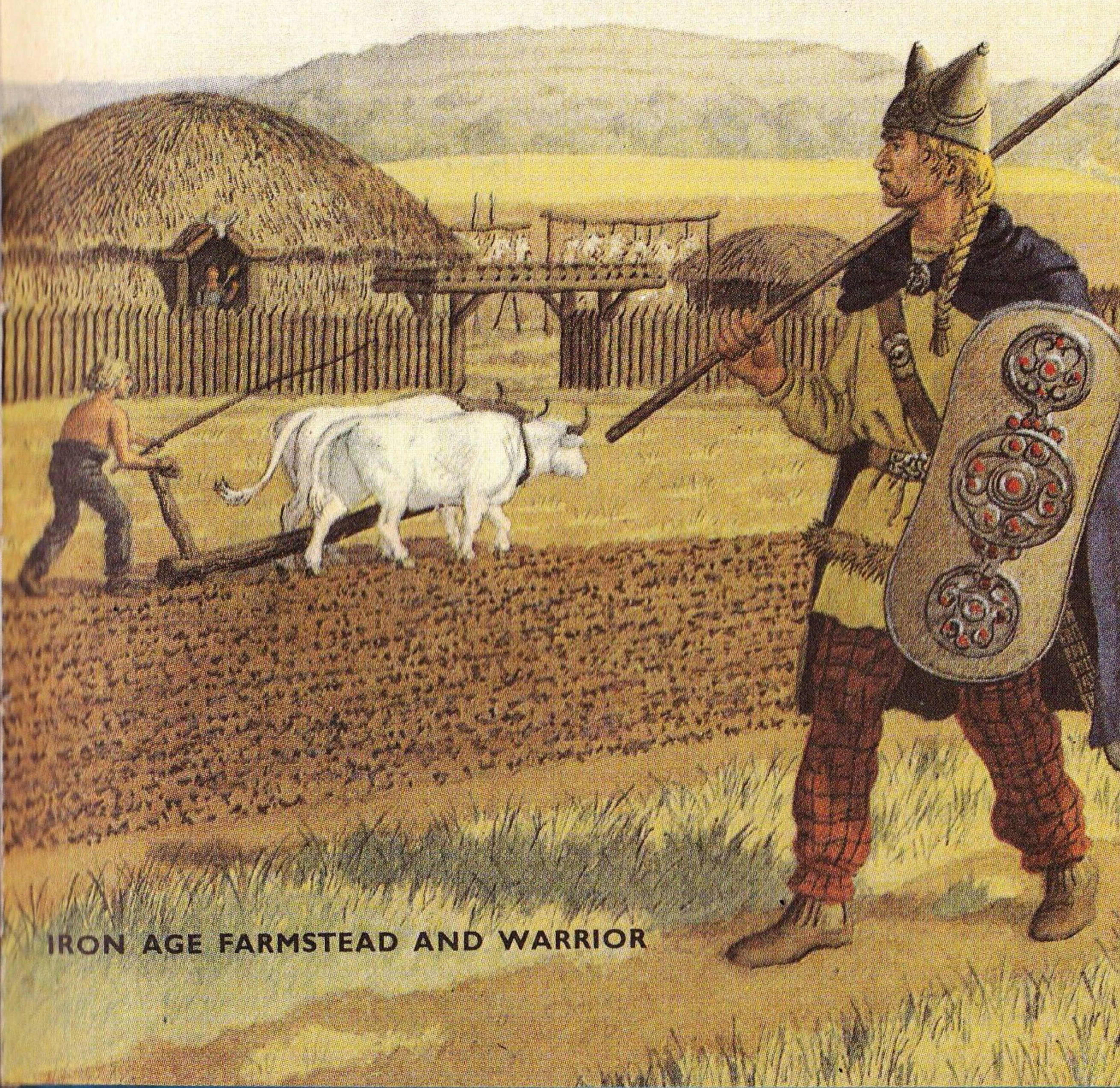
The Celts were farmers, and they had the advantage of using heavy ploughs with iron ploughshares to cultivate the land. They were the first people in Britain to live in villages, and they built fortified towns on hill-tops, or on peninsulas jutting out into the sea. In times of trouble people could go to the fortified towns from their farms and villages for safety. We can see the remains of these hill-forts all over Britain, and the largest is Maiden Castle, in Dorset.

The Celts brought something else new to Britain, the wheeled vehicle, so tracks were made connecting towns and villages. These were not roads as we know them, but they were the beginning of a network which linked every place in Britain.

The Celts, or Iron Age people, and Maiden Castle—the hill fort in Dorset.

PLAN VIEW OF MAIDEN CASTLE




IRON AGE FARMSTEAD AND WARRIOR

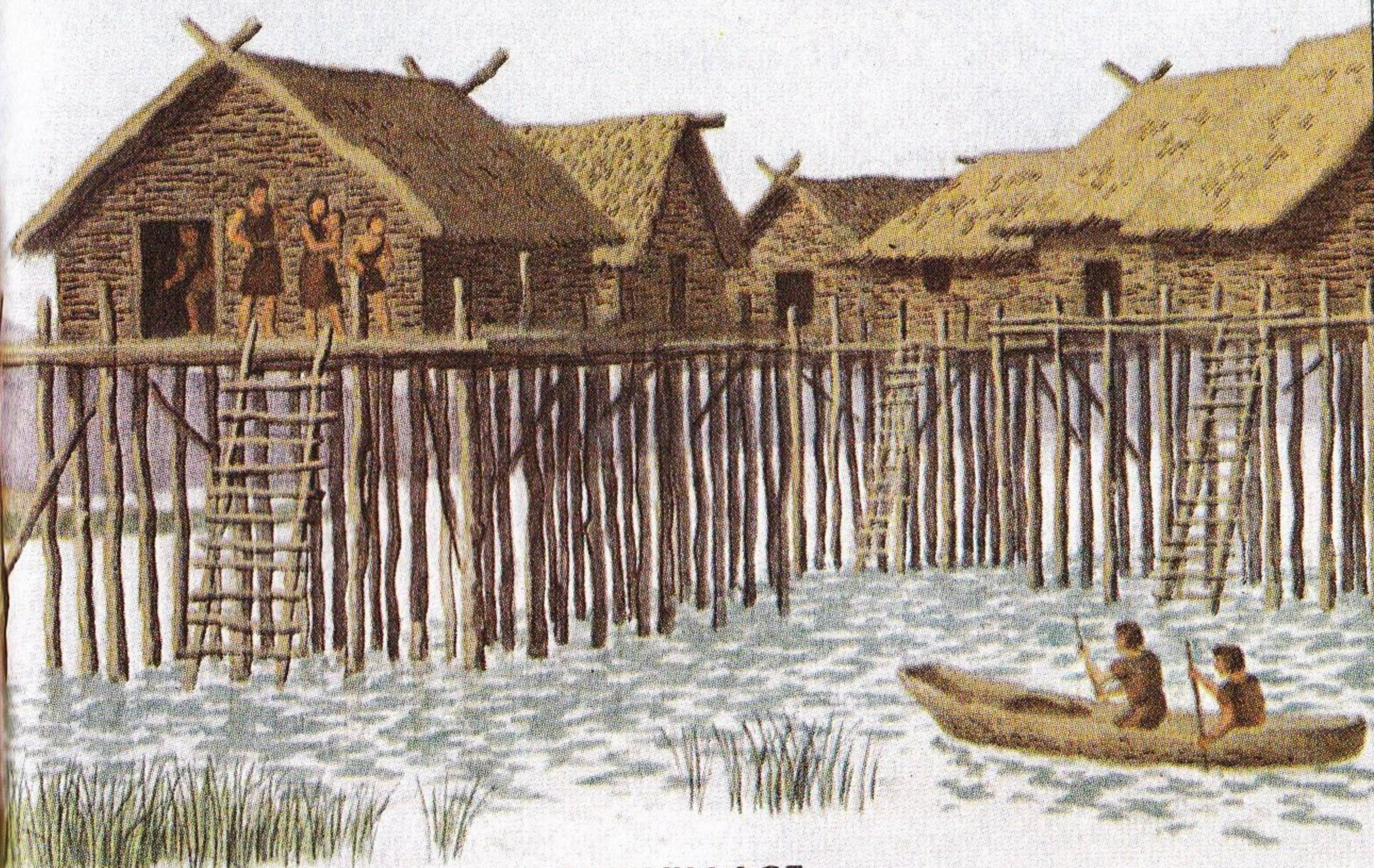
Lake Villages and Brochs

Some of the Celtic people built their villages on the edges of lakes, with the houses standing on stilts. This kept them above the water or mud and provided a good protection against enemies and wild animals. At Glastonbury and Mere, in Somerset, Iron Age lake villages have been excavated from the peat in which they became buried.

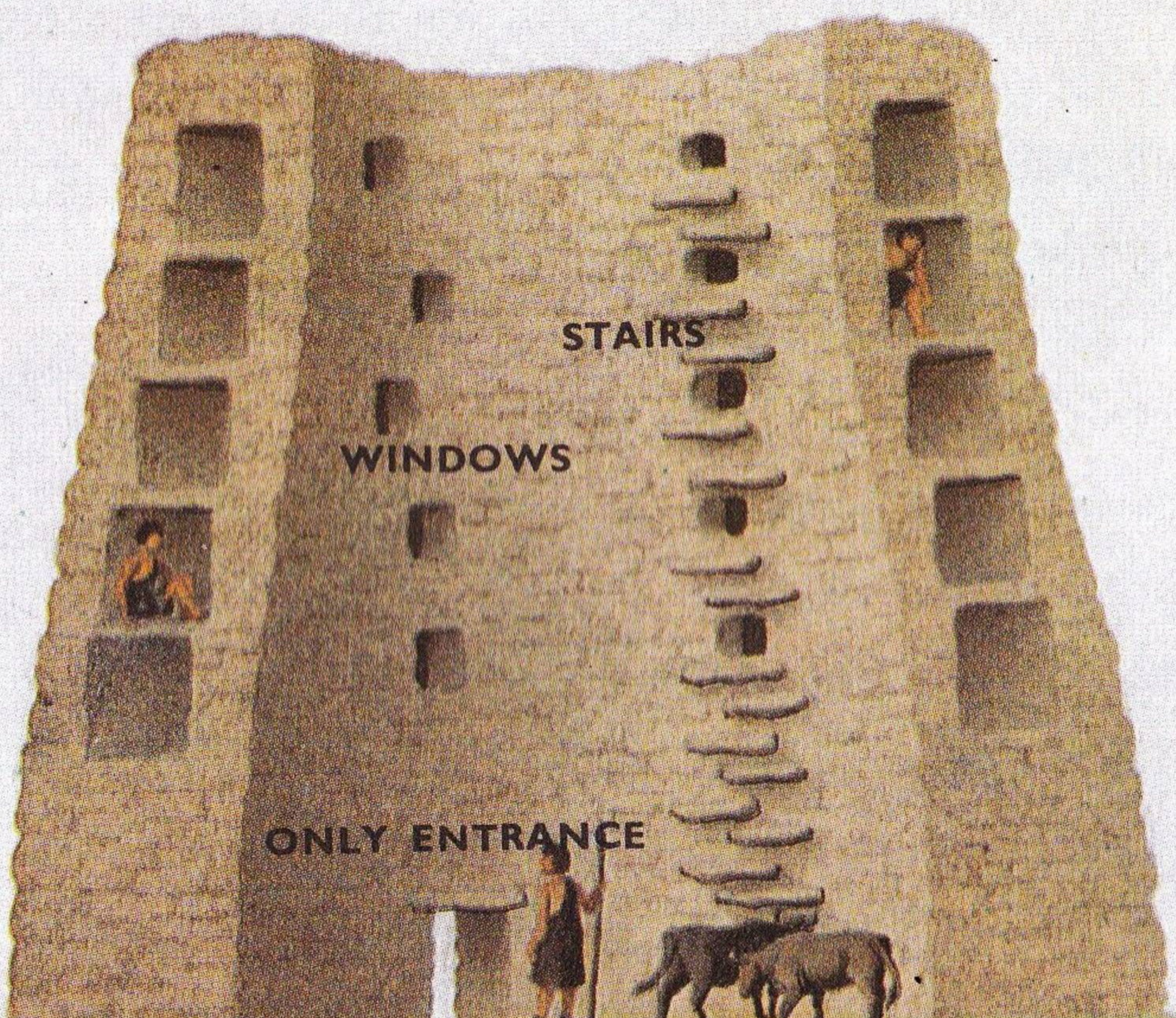
In the wild and remote parts of Scotland, the Celts lived in a special kind of building we call a *broch*. This was a stone tower, hollow in the middle, with rooms in the thickness of the walls. There were no openings on the outside of the broch except the very small entrance door, which could easily be blocked from the inside if the occupants were attacked.

The Celts have left us an important evidence of their life here which can be heard, but not seen. This is the Welsh language, the Gaelic which is spoken in parts of western Scotland, and Irish. The descendants of the Neolithic people who had fled westward were later joined by the Celts, when they in their turn were driven westwards by the Romans. The musical speech of the Celts has survived in Welsh, Gaelic and Irish. Another reminder of the Celts is in the names of many rivers all over Britain, which are Celtic words.

Celtic lake village and a broch in Scotland.



LAKE VILLAGE



BROCH CUT AWAY TO SHOW INTERIOR AND GALLERIES IN THE CIRCULAR WALLS

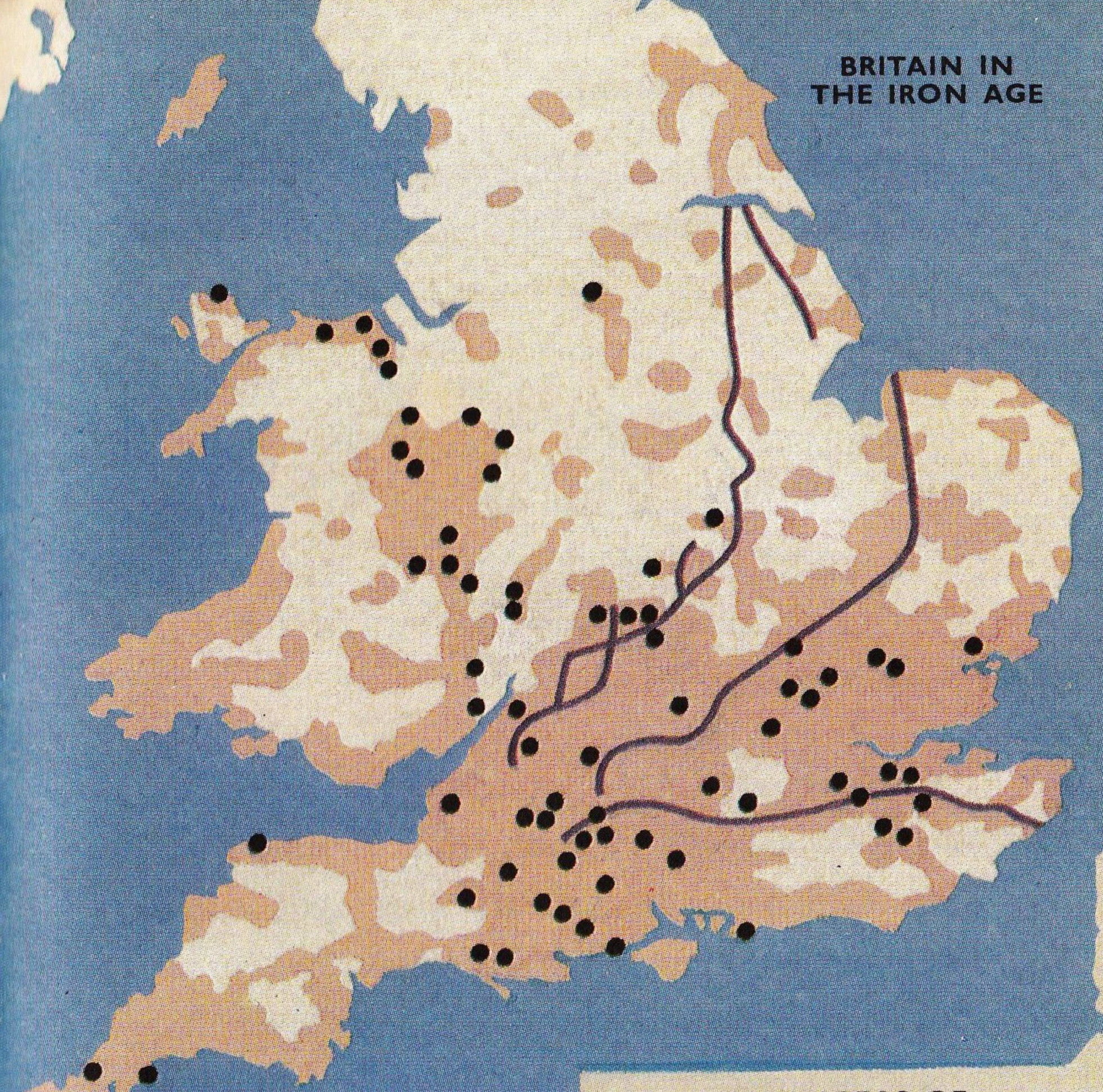
The Celtic Civilization

The Celtic people were the first to make Britain into a unified nation, though the tribal system remained and chiefs were often at war with their neighbours. An important factor in unifying the nation was the religion, with priests who were called Druids. We have no evidence that the Druids ever worshipped at Stonehenge, and as the oak tree was sacred to them it is more likely that they gathered in oak groves and forests.

The map shows that Iron Age Britain had a reasonably good road system, particularly towards the end of the period, when other Celts, the Belgae, came from Western Europe. The Belgae were clever engineers, and many of our towns were founded by them, among them London, Canterbury and Colchester.

The Celts had a coinage and many customs and practices of a civilized nation. They were fine metalworkers, and examples of their work can be seen in museums. We can still see some of the hill-figures they cut in the grass on chalk downs, such as the white horse of Uffington and the Cerne Abbas giant.

Iron Age Britain and some of their relics which have been found.


BRITAIN IN THE IRON AGE
MAIN AREAS OF IRON AGE CULTIVATION
● SOME OF THE LARGER HILL FORTS
MAIN TRACKWAYS

The Roman Conquest

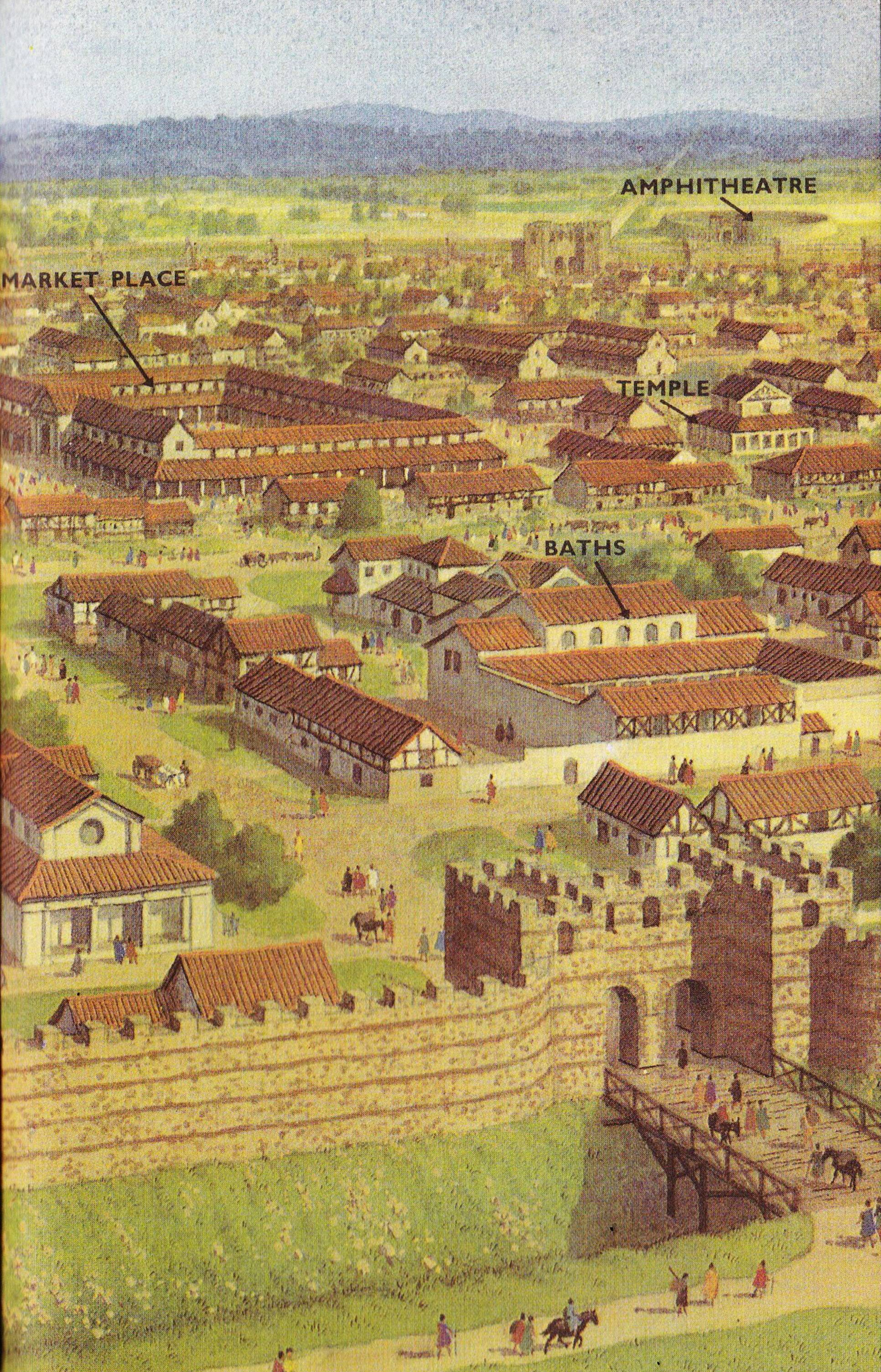
In the year 43 A.D. a Roman army landed on the south coast of Britain, quickly overcame the resistance of the Celtic Britons, and made the country a colony of the powerful Roman empire.

The Romans were highly efficient. They built camps and forts at cleverly chosen sites to control and govern the conquered land. Some sites have been excavated, revealing evidence which tells us about the Roman soldiers who used them.

When the country was brought under control, towns were built, always to the same practical pattern. The streets were straight and mostly at right-angles to each other, and in the middle of the town was the Forum, or market place. Around this were temples, baths, shops, important houses and the Basilica, or Town Hall.

Many of our present towns were once Roman; among them London, Lincoln, York and Bath, and others ending in *chester* or *caster*, from the Roman name, such as Colchester, Chester, Ilchester, Dorchester and Doncaster. Remains of a town are often found beneath a modern one.

A Roman town.


AMPHITHEATRE
MARKET PLACE
TEMPLE
BATHS

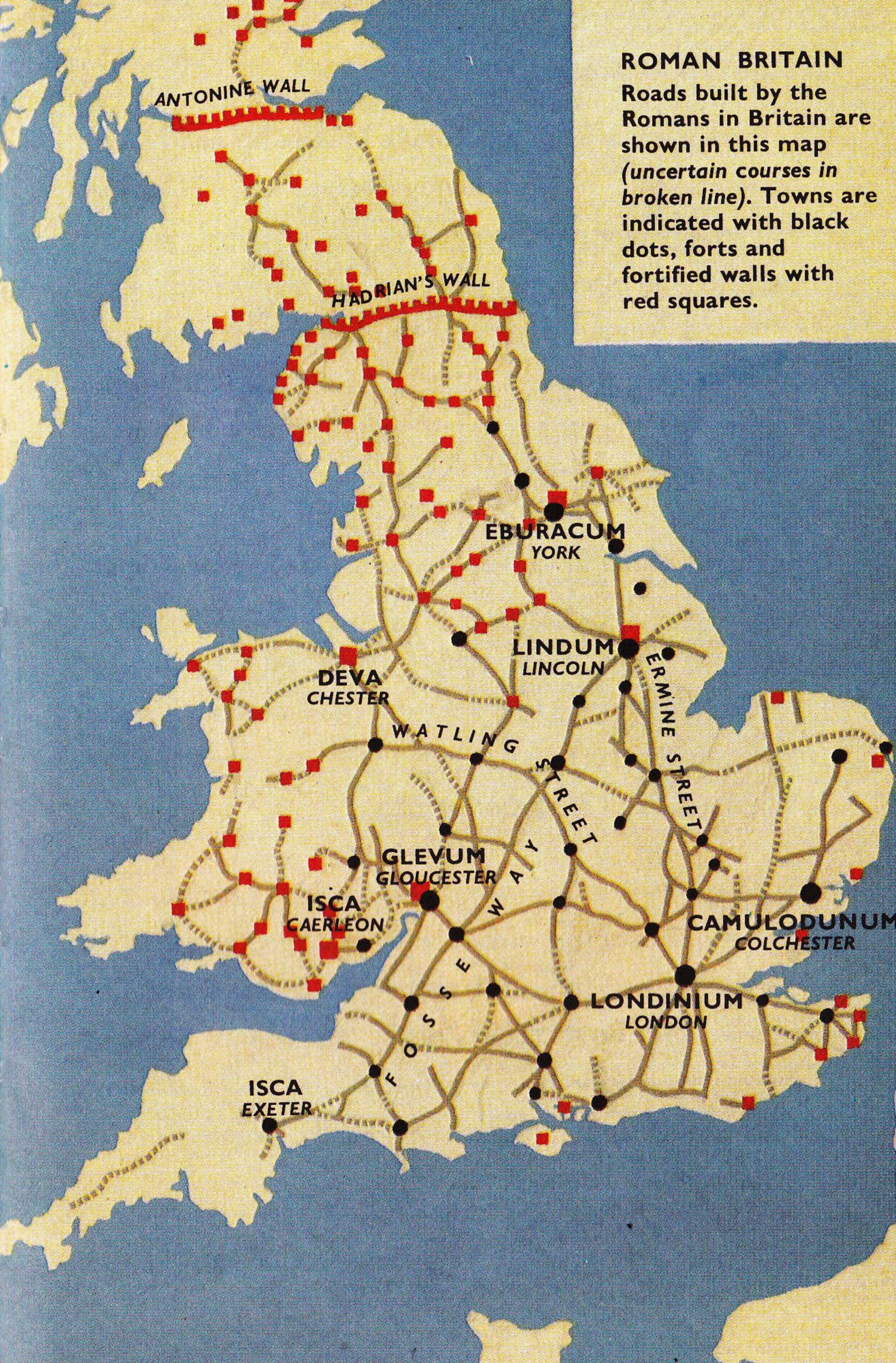
Roman Roads

The Romans built a network of very good roads, first for the easy and quick movement of troops and equipment to control the conquered people, and later for trade and peaceful purposes. These roads usually ran straight from point to point, with the turns nearly always on the top of hills.

Some of our present roads are made on Roman roads. The most famous is Watling Street, which runs for one hundred and eighty miles across the middle of England from London to Chester. Sometimes where a modern road turns you can see the track of the old Roman road continuing along a lane or across the fields, straight towards the next hill. The roads were about twenty-one feet wide with a good hard surface and a ditch on each side.

The Romans did not colonize Northern Scotland or Wales, nor the Cornish peninsula beyond Exeter. The western and northern frontiers of Roman Britain were guarded by forts, and, as a defence against the Scots raiders, the Emperor Hadrian built a strongly fortified wall from the Tyne to the Solway Firth. Some of the forts and parts of Hadrian's Wall can still be seen.

Roman Britain.



ROMAN BRITAIN

Roads built by the Romans in Britain are shown in this map *(uncertain courses in broken line)*. Towns are indicated with black dots, forts and fortified walls with red squares.

Roman Britain

Britain was part of the Roman Empire for nearly four hundred years. It was a highly civilized and well governed colony of Rome, where Romans and Britons lived together and often inter-married. The way of life was as it was in Rome, with the laws, customs, religion and sport of the Romans. Britain was important to the empire for the iron, lead, tin and silver which were mined and taken along the fine roads to the ports.

The principal town was London, and signs of Roman life are still being excavated there. Other towns have evidence of their Roman past, such as an amphitheatre where sports were once held. In Bath you can see the baths the Romans were always so fond of, and the warm water still flows from hot springs.

Wealthy Romans and Britons built comfortable country houses, or ‘villas’, with central heating under the floors, well-furnished rooms, a verandah, and fine mosaic work on the floors of the best rooms. Some of these villas have been excavated and show us how comfortable and civilized the wealthy people were in Britain fifteen hundred years ago.

A large bath in a Roman spa.

The Anglo-Saxons

When the Romans left Britain about the year 410 A.D. the land became a prey to invaders:—the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, from Germany and Denmark. When the Roman legions and military power had gone it was easy for these people to raid the coasts, murdering, burning and carrying away the booty. Then these invaders began to settle on the banks of the rivers, and finally moved inland. They were a vigorous farming people, and they cultivated moorlands, reclaimed marshes and cleared patches of forest to make farms.

Britain gradually became the home of a mixture of peoples; the newcomers as well as all the races which had settled here in past ages. It became a people we call by the general name of *Anglo-Saxons*.

The Anglo-Saxons developed Britain for farming and established villages and towns. The towns were usually built on the sites of Roman towns, and the villages are still with us. Town and village names often derive from the Anglo-Saxon words, such as places ending in *ham*. We have very little written evidence of these 'Dark Ages', but it was during this time that the English countryside was created.

Anglo-Saxons clearing forest.

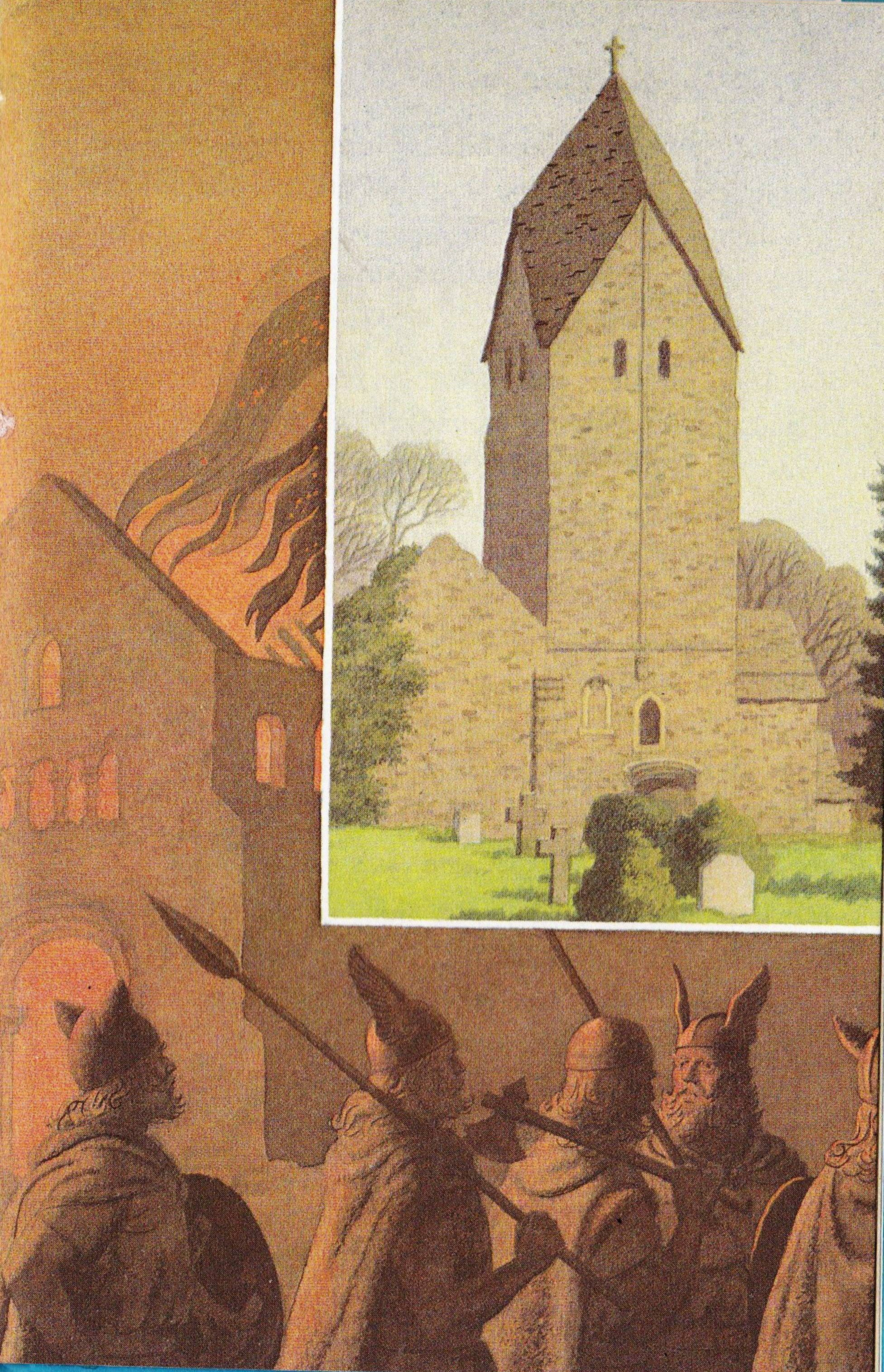
Kingdoms and Dykes

Anglo-Saxon England was divided into a number of kingdoms, often with elaborate defensive banks and ditches along the frontiers. Some of these great dykes still remain, such as Offa's Dyke, Wansdyke and Grims Ditch, and they can still be seen stretching boldly across the countryside.

When the heathen Anglo-Saxons were converted to Christianity in the seventh century, Britain became the leading centre of Christian scholarship, so that scholars came from all over Europe to study at the great monasteries such as those at Jarrow, Wearmouth and Lindisfarne.

These famous and splendid religious houses were destroyed in the ninth century when the heathen Vikings came from Scandinavia, first as raiders and then to settle. They penetrated deeply into England until in 878 A.D. King Alfred defeated them in a great battle in the south-west. The Vikings became Christians and remained to live in peace, and a new and unified England came into being. Only a few Anglo-Saxon buildings remain, and about half a dozen churches. But many churches have Saxon carving and details such as fonts, and we have some magnificent manuscripts.

Anglo-Saxon church, Sompting in Sussex and Vikings destroying a monastery.



The Norman Conquest

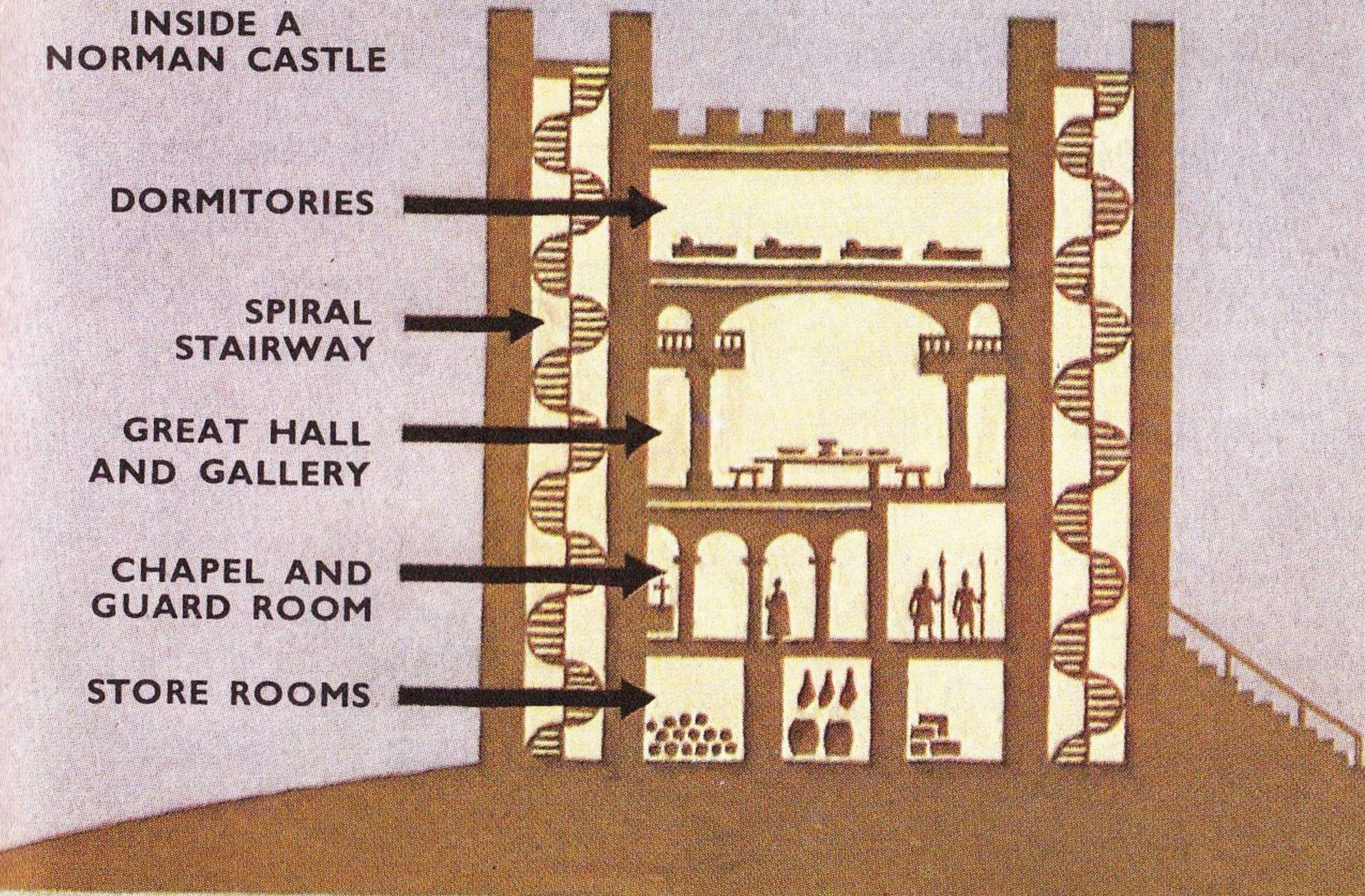
In 1066 A.D. William, Duke of Normandy, invaded and conquered England. The Norman Conquest is important in the story of our land, for it caused more changes than any other event until the Industrial Revolution seven hundred years later.

There are signs of the Norman conquest all over the land, such as the great mounds of the '*motte and bailey*' castles. These strongly defended forts were built at strategic points to control the conquered Anglo-Saxons. The 'motte' was either a convenient hill or was built by hand in the form of a huge mound, shaped rather like an upturned pudding-basin. It was surrounded by a moat and had a wooden tower called a 'keep,' on the top. The 'bailey' was an enclosure in front of the mound, defended by a ditch and palisade. The White Tower of the Tower of London stands on a motte built by William the Conqueror.

Later strong castles were built of stone, either on the mound or beside it. The Normans were great builders. Whereas the Saxons built mainly with wood, so that their buildings did not endure, the Normans used stone, and many of their castles, cathedrals and churches still stand. You can still see the huge mounds of the Norman mottes, though now they are covered by grass.

A stone-built Norman castle.

INSIDE A NORMAN CASTLE



A NORMAN CASTLE

Norman Britain

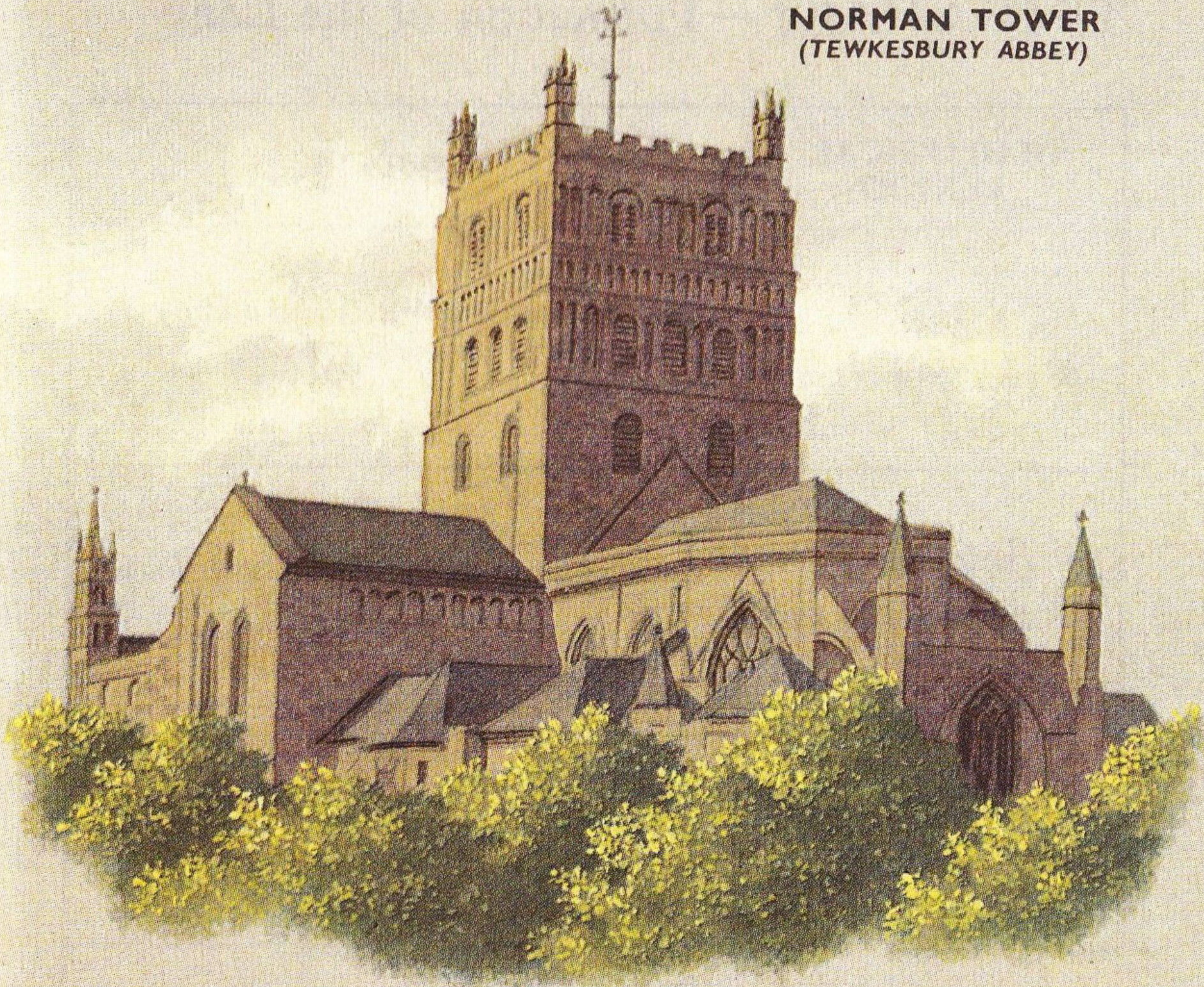
The Normans settled in the land they had won, and imposed on it the government and the organization they were familiar with in Normandy. They were great builders, and remains of their work can be seen in castles, cathedrals, churches and palaces.

Because they used more stone, the Normans were able to introduce new architectural ideas. They built very thick walls, supporting the roof with thick round pillars. They used round-topped arches and built squat towers. They found towns and villages already established, but they set about 'modernizing' them to the standards and customs of the year 1066.

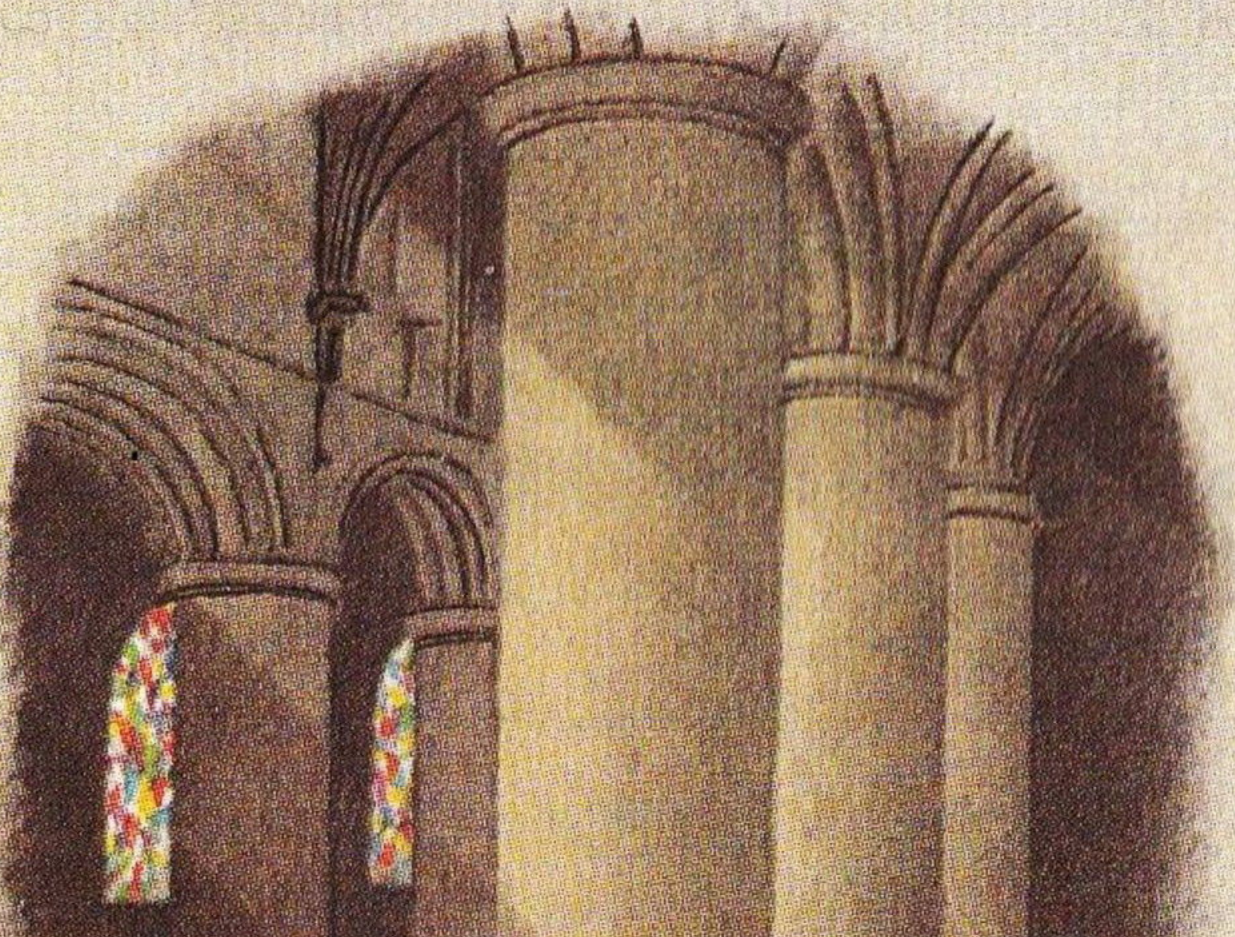
The Norman conquest was the last invasion of England, and in all basic essentials the land was the same then as it is to-day. All the peoples who came and settled found it a good land, with a fertile soil, a healthy climate, and plentiful woods, rivers and springs.

Our story began some five million years ago, when the land which became Britain was first formed. We have told of the development of our land, of the different peoples who lived here, and how each used and shaped these islands to suit his needs.

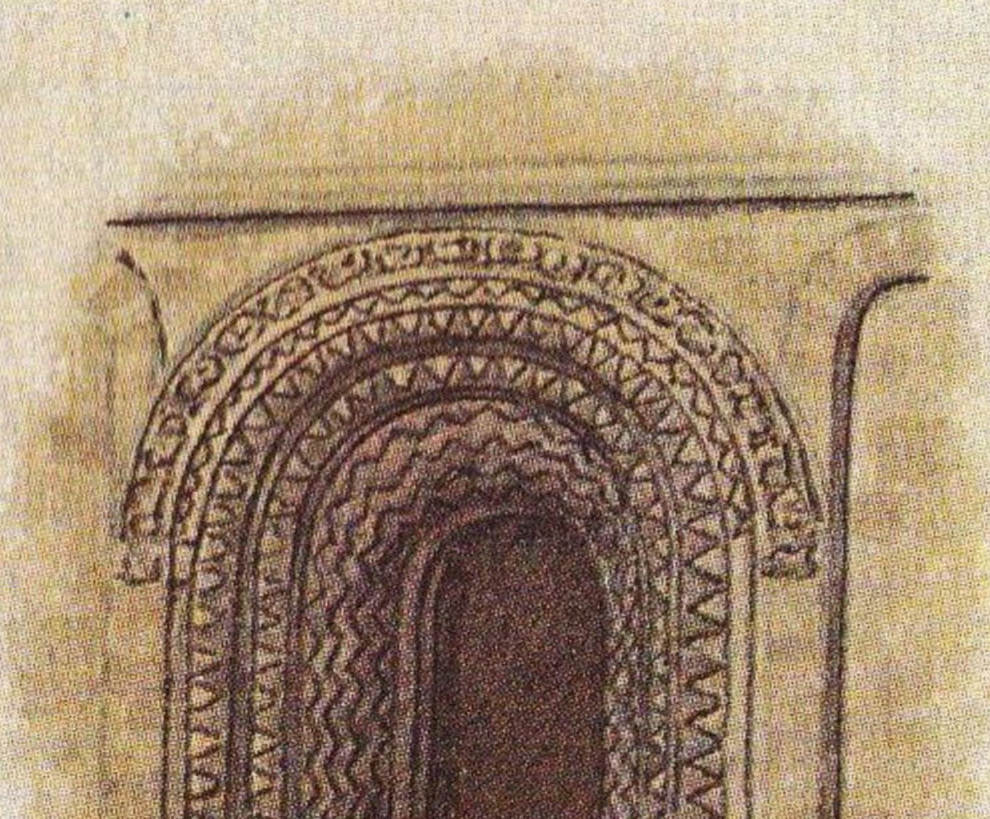
A Norman abbey showing squat tower, doorway and interior pillars.



NORMAN TOWER
(TEWKESBURY ABBEY)



NORMAN NAVE
(GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL)

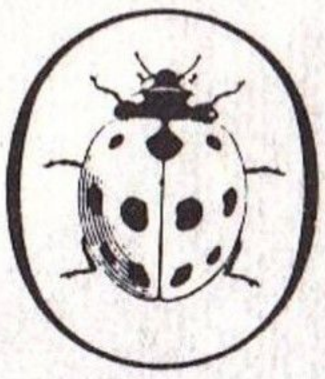


NORMAN DOORWAY
(IFFLEY OXFORDSHIRE)

TIME CHART—Formation of the Land

GEOLOGICAL PERIOD	EVENTS
CAMBRIAN *500 million years ago*	*First formation of rocks and oceans. Seaweed and the earliest living creatures.*
DEVONIAN *300 million years ago*	*Earliest fishes and plants. Fossils found of these.*
CARBONIFEROUS *250 million years ago*	*Vegetation and forests, making our coal. More creatures including the great dragonflies.*
JURASSIC *150 million years ago*	*Large reptiles and flying creatures; dinosaurs, pterodactyls and sea creatures.*
EOCENE *70 million years ago*	*Great volcanic activity, which made the general shape of the highlands and lowlands.*
THE ICE AGES *600 thousand to* *12 thousand years ago*	*Series of very cold periods with warm periods in between. During this time Man came to live in Britain. At the end of the Ice Ages Britain was separated from Europe and became two islands.*

NOTE: The time given is only estimated.



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